

Poetry, Writer's Block, Dams, Blame, and Angry Letters

A Journal of Desire Armed

Anarchy

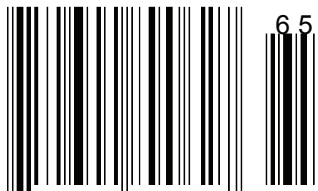
**Anti-Imperialism:
born again rhetoric**

**Call [*Appel*]: a new
translation**

**Barry Pateman
on heroism
against Franco**

#65/Spring-Summer 2008
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Reviews include: A Problem of Memory; Anarchy and Art; Come Dungeons Dark;
endgame; How Nonviolence Protects the State; Revolutionary Letters; Riding the Wind

Toward a society based on mutual aid, voluntary cooperation, & the liberation of desire

ANTI-IMPERIALISM: YET ANOTHER STATIST IDEOLOGY

by Lawrence Jarach

During the era of neo-colonialism, the Anti-Imperialist was primarily interested in supporting whatever National Liberation outfit happened to be causing the most problems for American and/or British (and to a lesser extent French, Portuguese, and Dutch) foreign policy, using the binary logic that the enemy of one's enemy is one's friend. What that meant in practice was that the Anti-Imperialist was nothing more than a shill for a smaller state (or a state in the making). Adhering to the ideology of Anti-Imperialism was a way to advocate something called Revolution, while avoiding the problems associated with local and international class struggle. The Oppressed Nation (usually represented by the Stalino-Maoist National Liberation Front) became the revolutionary subject, supplanting the more familiar international working class. Anti-imps, who would never even consider sitting in the same room as a local Stalinist, gleefully expressed their active solidarity with the new rulers of formerly colonized countries, even going so far as to excuse the liquidation of dissident Leftists in North Vietnam and the suppression of striking workers in Castro's Cuba.

No anarchist would be in favor of imperialism (or sexism, or racism, or fascism) of course, but declaring oneself to be an Anti-Imperialist still means one of two things (and perhaps an overlap of the two). On the one hand it is an empty and passive opinion, requiring no particular strategy or action, and needing no explanation. On the other hand, it doesn't just mean that one is against imperialism; it specifies a particular way to fight against imperialism—that is Anti-Imperialism. It still means taking sides in disputes between parties vying for government control (either trying to keep it or trying to overthrow it). Anti-Imperialism remains attractive to Leftists precisely because it mandates that anti-imps support whatever Popular Front-type formation happens to be in an antagonistic relationship toward a chosen imperial state; thus it requires little in the way of critical thinking. Anti-Imperialism is an unthinking person's revolutionary (im)posture.

Seeing the armed struggles of foreign Left-nationalists as the only relevant international revolutionary activity and taking their cue from Che (the executioner of the aforementioned striking workers), anti-imps in Germany and the US (and elsewhere) tried to open up armed fronts in solidarity with the North Vietnamese in their war against the United States. Starting from about 1969 their muddled reasoning led to the creation of urban guerrilla formations like the Red Army Faction and the Weather Underground. These vanguardists substituted self-referential and sectarian ideas for revolutionary theory, and militarized clandestine armed struggle for the revolutionary self-organization of workers.

In Germany, the end of overt US involvement in Southeast Asia shifted the main focus of anti-imps to the struggle of Palestinians against the brutal expansionist policies of the State of Israel. The chill-

ing, self-marginalizing, and nazi-echoing apotheosis of German anti-imps (in collaboration with the Marxist-Leninist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP]) arrives with the *selekzia* (selection—a process first made infamous at Auschwitz) at Entebbe in 1976. Jews—not just those holding Israeli passports—were separated out as permanent hostages from among the hijacked passengers; the others were released. A further adventure was to have been the assassinations of the heads of the Jewish communities in Berlin and Frankfurt.

By the mid-1980s, the marginalizing antics of the remnants of the WU had devolved into a series of actions mostly undertaken to provide them with the resources to maintain their self-chosen clandestine existence: bank robberies, armored car holdups, and shoot-outs with

the police. Despite this self-defeating strategy, the romantic allure of urban guerrillaism has led many anarchists (following their mentor Ward Churchill) to provide financial and moral support to surviving imprisoned Third World nationalists and “North American anti-imperialists”—decoded: white people who unequivocally support the Revolutionary Leadership™ of Third World nationalists.

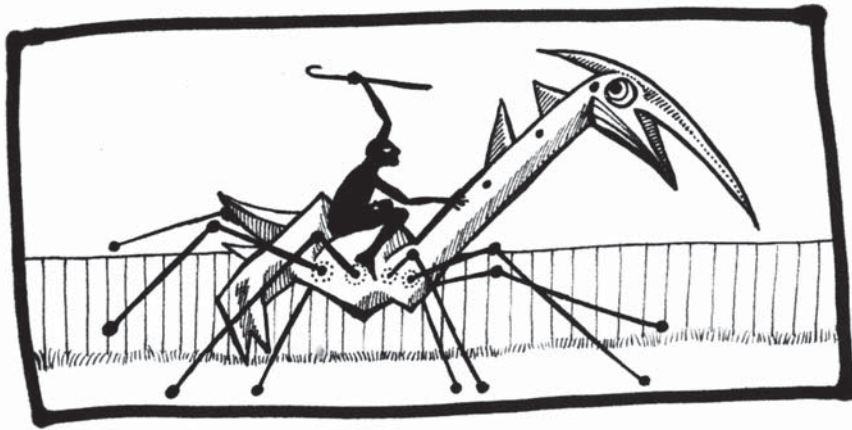
A decade ago, the anti-imps of ANSWER supported Milosevic the ethnic cleanser. These days, American and European anti-imps express their solidarity with the clerical obscurantists and misogynists of Hamas and Hezbollah, and/or the Stalinists of the PFLP because they are resisting the militarist ethnic cleansing of the State of Israel. It doesn't seem to bother the anti-imps too much that these gangs spend almost as much time fighting, kidnapping, torturing, and killing each other in order to consolidate their political and territorial hegemony.

Anarchist anti-imps are compelled to take sides in every dispute, desperate to find some group—any group—whose Revolution™ they can support. Being activists, they have to Do Something; more often than not they get sucked into Popular Fronts (ANSWER—Worker's World Party; World Can't Wait—RCP), becoming more bodies at the latest march, at worst insisting—against all evidence to the contrary—that these cross-class fronts really are authentic grassroots progressive coalitions subject to direct democracy, and not under the control or sponsorship of Leninists at all.

Anti-Imperialism is just as bankrupt today as it was in the '40s and '70s; it should be avoided as a label and position by any principled anti-statist. Anarchists have always supported internationalist working-class based tendencies promoting self-organized resistance to colonialism and imperialism, regardless of its country of origin. We have also avoided Popular Front-based pseudo-opposition to fascism and imperialism, whether it is of the Islamist or Stalino-Maoist variety. The relevance of anarchist and other anti-statist ideas and practice can only increase by us refusing to be fooled by the adherence of our supposed allies to yet another statist ideology.



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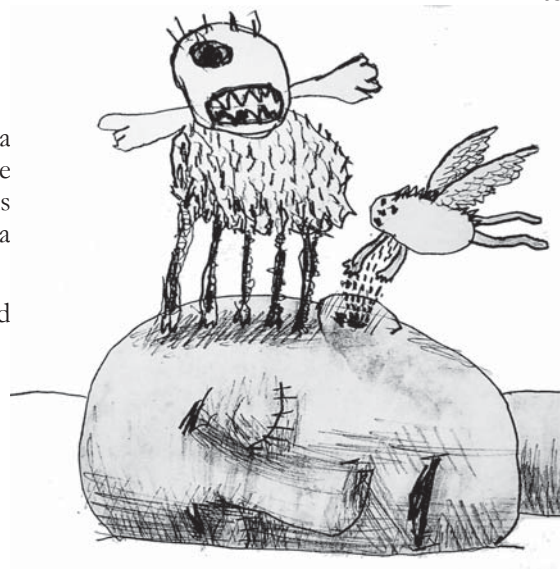
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Dan Lewis

Inside *Anarchy*

This fall has been a good one. The response to the last issue has been as engaged as we had hoped for and only half as hostile as we feared. Members of the editorial group attended events on the West Coast including the Victoria Anarchist Bookfair and on the East Coast including the Mid-Atlantic Radical Bookfair and the Reclaiming the Anarchist Tradition (RAT) conference in Vermont. At RAT several of us gave presentations that were well attended by interested participants. When the news and the internet continue to discourage us, nothing beats face-to-face dialogue to maintain our excitement and interest in this project. Thanks to the organizers and the people who put us up and put up with us.

This issue does not have a theme. Instead we offer a selection of topics that range across several categories. Included is a brand new translation of *Call* (*Appel*), by our very own Lawrence Jarach. This essay has been underappreciated up till now in North America, because of translation problems. Originally, *Call* was written from a French perspective and so is about a French situation; most of the references are really French. The persistent cancer that we call the Left in North America is far more integrated in France, where social movements have always been driven by the twin consequences of that integration; love and hate. The first half of *Call* is included here, the second half will be in an upcoming issue.

We also have transcribed a presentation by Barry Pateman about the resistance to Franco after the suppression of the Spanish Revolution. This presentation was given at the AK Press warehouse on the anniversary of the Spanish Revolution in 2006 along with a question-answer discussion facilitated by Law-

rence Jarach. Finally, from occasional contributor Burt Green, we have an analysis of Anti-Imperialism, which once again seems to be gaining prominence among anti-authoritarians in North America.

We also include the latest entry for the Egoist Encyclopedia, by Wolfi Landstreicher; Liana Doctrine's latest column on the problems with blame, and thoughts on practicing anarchy within the health care profession in the Bad Medicine column.

And of course, many fun and cranky letters.

This issue is the first one since the loss of one of our major distributors. While another large distributor appears to have taken up the slack, we are not optimistic about what this will mean in terms of our placement in some of the larger chains where we have been in the

past. Once again we implore our readers to subscribe to the magazine. Do not count on it being stocked at your local major retailer. We will continue to attempt to be available there but the end of independent publishing as we have known it is nigh. The end is nigh!

Along with the launch of this issue of the magazine is a major update to our website. We have changed the technology that drives the site which now provides a variety of useful things for us. The old software did not allow for easy-to-understand collaboration between the editors, the forum software was brittle, surveys were administratively unusable, etc, etc. No longer. We now have an opportunity to open up our discussion forums for people to discuss the magazine and topics related to our anarchist future. We look forward to the discussions and collaborations that may result.



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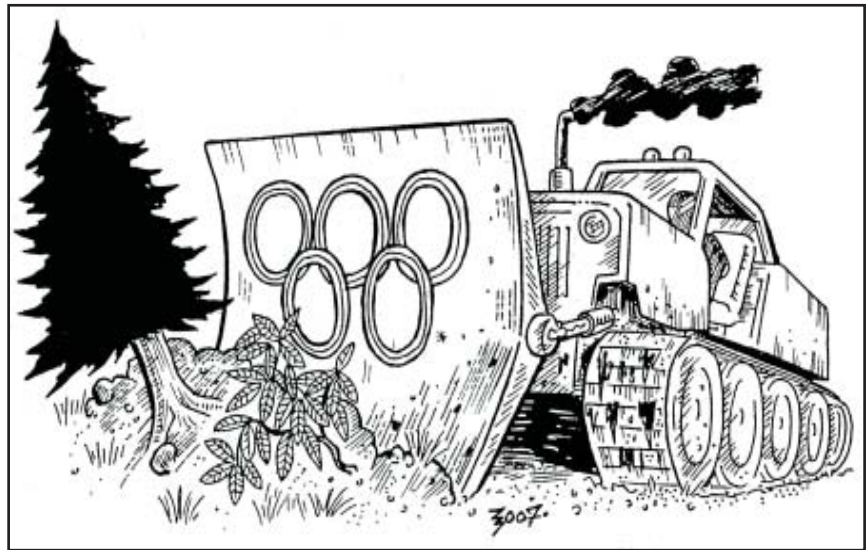
Tourism Equals The New Manifest Destiny*

Anarchist actions against the 2010 Olympics are the latest, best examples of anarchists playing well with others.

The 2010 Olympics are scheduled for British Columbia, Canada—a part of the continent also known as some of the unceded territory of the Secwepemc people. For those who haven't thought about this particular piece of spectacular culture, what it means to have the Olympics come to your neighborhood is increasing police presence, from street sweeps displacing homeless people to new laws that limit people's use of words and images deemed to be the property of the Olympic conglomerate (including *games, medals, gold, silver, bronze, 2010, Vancouver, or winter* used in conjunction).

In the case of Vancouver, the Olympics also mean a speeding up of the day-to-day exploitation of the land and water, and of the ongoing theft of lands that native peoples are fighting to protect. A journalist who sat in on a talk by Olympics promoters editorialized that according to them “the real purpose of the 2010 Olympic bid is to seduce the provincial and federal governments and long-suffering taxpayers into footing a billion-dollar bill to pave the path for future real estate sales.” Indeed this was the presenter's opinion. “If the Olympic bid wasn't happening,” he told the developers, “we would have to invent something.”

Indigenous peoples have been the primary protesters against the 2010 Olympics, and there was an intercontinental gathering in Sonora,



Mexico, calling for a boycott of the Olympics and promising at least hundreds of protesters in the streets of Vancouver during the event. At the conference speakers cited past resistance and repression, including the massacre of over 300 in Mexico in 1968, when—during huge protests against the Olympics—tanks were brought in and indiscriminate shooting killed hundreds of protesters, including children, and passers-by.

Anarchists have announced the new Olympic sport of amateur vandalism of the Royal Bank of Canada (as one of the Canadian sponsors of the Olympics). This sport can happen at any time leading up to and including the normal games and a gold medal™ is promised to whoever does the most damage at a single location.

A solidarity game was played at the Re/Max realty trailer at the Sun Peaks ski resort development site.

These actions demonstrate a self-interested, insurrectionary solidarity, enlivened by a sense of play. Let's see more of these.

*Quotation from <http://.no2010.com>

Anarchists in Trees

In the first week of November, 2007, students and residents of Santa Cruz, CA, including many anarchists, started a tree-sit in resistance to the UC Santa Cruz Long Range Development Plan (LRDP). The organizers' talking points include the destruction of 120 acres of beautiful forest to build new roads and a biomedical lab among other facilities in the currently undeveloped upper campus; the expansion of prestige-generating graduate programs and privately-funded research while cutting back undergraduate programs in the arts, humanities, and social sciences; the increasing cost of living and overcrowding in Santa Cruz, which has housing, traffic, and water resources already nearing crisis. They also cite problems with the process – disregard of the concerns of Santa Cruz residents, disregard of existing problems with infrastructure that will be further stressed by this growth, a tendency towards privatization as a response to the crisis that

this growth will create, disregard of opposition by the SC city council and many significant faculty members, and finally an inadequate Environmental Impact Report, which had no external review.

While the LRDP is the spark to this resistance, protesters have raised issues from animal rights activism and ethical questions about nano- and bio-technologies to the university's poor labor practices to the destruction of neighborhoods to the global consequences of regular operating procedures of the UC system.

The anarchists in this action are not trying to organize people into groups (their website states "We are not officially affiliated with any organizations") and the tactics reflect this. Organizing around the tree sit has included music and cultural events; a Really, Really Free Market, and discussion groups on the LRDP and on fighting racism, among other things. These are held at the site of the tree-sit, and are thus

a way of increasing and maintaining visibility, having discussions that could be valuable in their own right, and also, obviously, supporting the people in the trees.

Squatters, Workers, and Hunger Strikers Resist in Barcelona

In the early morning hours of February 4th, a group of young people left the house of some friends after a night of celebration. Some were on their way to the metro, others were on their way to another party that was being held in the nearby street of Sant Pere Mes Baix.

Once in Sant Pere, they saw a group of people having a discussion with the Guardia Urbana (one of the many police forces in this area) outside of the Anarko Penya, the squat where the other party was taking place. As the group approached this discussion, the police charged suddenly and without warning, beating people severely. The young people tried to leave the area, but could not escape the police blows. In the midst of this, all kinds of objects were being thrown from the balconies of the Anarko Penya. When the initial chaos of the situation had passed, seven people had been arrested and a policeman was in a coma. Two more people were arrested later in hospital, where they had gone to seek treatment due to bicycle accidents. They had not been in Sant Pere Mes Baix at all that

night, they were simply arrested due to their "squatter-like" appearance (or so perceived by the police) and the fact that they had injuries. All of the nine who were arrested were tortured by two different police forces: the Guardia Urbana and the Mossos d'Esquadra. They were beaten and tortured at the moment of their arrest and continuously in the police station, hospitals and police vans. They suffered multiple injuries all over their bodies, blows to the head, black eyes, and two had broken arms.

The first official press release from the city council said that a flower pot, thrown from the balcony of the Anarko Penya, had hit the policeman. The official version then went through a variety of changes before arriving at the final conclusion that the three people still in prison had supposedly thrown stones at the police from the street with the intention to kill.

This is one more example of increasing repression in Barcelona, and people there are calling for international solidarity for nine anarchist squatters beginning trial on January 7, 2008. Three of them, Alex, Rodrigo, and Juan, have been locked up since February 4, 2006. Barcelona police disappeared and tortured the three squatters for several days before putting them in jail. The three face 12 years imprisonment and half a million in fines. International solidarity actions were held 21 and 22 of December for the prisoners of 4F, with a fierce demonstration taking over many of the streets in central Barcelona.

Police in Barcelona have carried out around 200 evictions in 2007. Many new occupations have occurred, but the total number of



squats in Barcelona has fallen from nearly 300 to just over 200, since January. On Monday, 17 December, police came without any warning to evict a house in the neighborhood of San Andreu. After roughly removing the occupants, they tore down the roof of the house without allowing anyone to recover any of their belongings. On Wednesday, 19 December, several more people were made homeless for the holidays with another illegal eviction in the Clot neighborhood. About 50 police came to evict the small apartment, which had not received any notice of an eviction process.

Also on 22 December, anarchists in Barcelona began a twenty-four hour hunger-strike and occupation of the Plaza St. Jaume, in front of the city government building, in solidarity with Italian prisoners. Since 1 December, 700 Italian prisoners with life sentences and 4200 others have been on hunger strike, demanding an abolition of life sentences, which they describe as a slow death sentence carried out one day at a time.

Bus drivers in Barcelona called a strike for 21-24 December and 2-4 January, demanding a second day of leave per week. Workers with the anarcho-syndicalist union, Confederacion General de Treball (CGT) agreed to go on strike to press their demands against the owner, TMB, allowing only minimum services needed to connect neighborhoods without other transportation options. The CGT linked with squatters and direct action anarchists to ensure that scabs would not be permitted to keep the buses running. While

CGT workers picketed all the bus depots, anarchists, independentistas, and squatters throughout the city took action against buses operated by scabs, splashing paint on the windshields, breaking the rearview mirrors, or puncturing the tires, so that buses had to return to the station. Although in the morning a large number of buses were in the streets, around midday hardly any buses were passing by even on major streets. 54 buses driven by scabs were attacked and sabotaged the first day, with tires punctured, rearview mirrors broken, or windshields splashed with paint, rendering them immobile. One bus was even forcibly evicted by a rowdy crowd of strike supporters. The city of Barcelona possesses only two cranes capable of hauling decommissioned buses, and needless to say the day's attacks went quite beyond their capacity. Additionally,

bus stations all throughout the city were spraypainted with stencils urging solidarity with the strikers, although reflecting the dramatic changes caused in Spanish society by mass media and spectacular consumerism, a distressing number of people were grumbling about the inconvenience and calling for various forms of repression against strikers and direct actionists. Major newspapers collaborated with police to provide a negative headline to the strike, claiming that someone was injured by one sabotage action, though this has yet to be verified by independent sources. Previously, the bus workers had built connections with squatters, sending a letter of support to the ten-year-old squatted social center Can Vies, which is on property owned by TMB.



long-lived Barcelona squat, Can Vies

Riding A Jargon-free Social Ecology

Reviewed by Aragorn!

**Riding the Wind:
A New Philosophy for a New Era**
Peter Marshall
Continuum New York
262 pages. Paper \$35.95

This book describes itself as a book of philosophy but is actually a jargon free restatement of social ecology for a non-political (in the anarchist sense of the term) audience. As such, it stands as a clear explanation of the motivations and aspirations for such a society and a decent introduction for someone who is already attracted to green & left-of-liberal ideas. It provides a vision of a society that is very different than this one and could begin discussions about sustainability, kindness, and social change from a different orientation than more “radical” (in the sense of riot porn and dumpster diving) texts and publications.

Marshall is primarily known in anarchist circles as the author who has written the excellent introduction to the broadly understood anarchist tradition, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*. Marshall has been involved with the Freedom Press circle for 20 odd years and is a fellow at the Royal Geographical Society (of which Kropotkin was also a member). Peter had a moment of broader fame due to a six part PBS documentary series on his circumnavigation

of Africa by sail. He is a prolific author and sailor and has written about alchemy, megaliths, astrology, William Godwin, the history of ecology, William Blake, Cuba, his adventures and sailing around Africa and the Aegean Sea.

But what is social ecology? Long time readers of this magazine would be hard pressed to forget social ecology as interpreted through the myopic rantings of Murray Bookchin. Marshall steers clear of any whiff of those. Marshall’s social ecology, which he calls “liberation ecology,” breaks most clearly with Bookchin in his lack of emphasis on capitalist social relationships as being to blame for humans’ horrific relationship with the planet they live on.

The most important and urgent task is to develop a new relationship with nature, or rather reinvent the archaic one we have lost. We do not stand apart as subject and object: humans are as natural as wolves, oaks and rocks. Nature is the air we breathe, the land we tread, the body we move. But as a species with tremendous power through our science and technology, we have a responsibility to use the power well, a responsibility for ourselves and the rest of nature that is our only dwelling. (95)

Instead Marshall points less to first causes and more to solutions. Most of his solutions are so innocuous and gentle as to barely bear repeating. Being so agreeable and pleasant, Marshall achieves a kind of anti-Bookchin aura which, for all the other criticisms you can make of Bookchin, ends up being somewhat forgettable.

Take his use (rather overuse) of sailing metaphors. Naturally sailing is something Marshall enjoys, and it seems

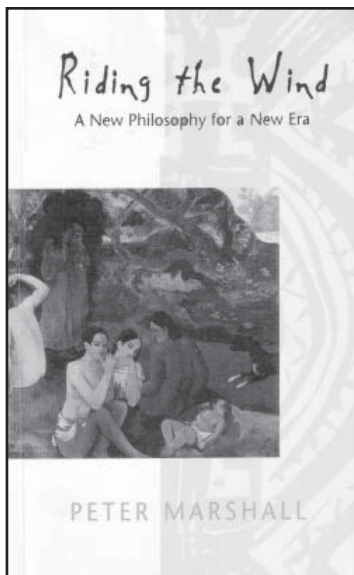
like a wonderful way to pass the time, but one’s own hobbies are rarely as interesting to other people as they are to oneself. And throughout this book we are tested by metaphors like “riding the wind,” “stretching wings” and “waters of lucidity” to walk away from the book entirely. Couple this with a certain inclination to use soft terms to describe hard things and the problems with trying to write to a general audience become apparent.

It is not too late. There is nothing to prevent us from developing a new philosophy for a new era. We can create a new society in harmony with each other and the earth. We can, above all, learn how to ride the wind of the new millennium and to sail well together on the vast ocean of being —exhilarated, joyful and free! (262)

The book is at least five, possibly ten, chapters too long. Once the line was established that living gently on the earth and respecting life is the goal of a liberation ecology it was entirely unnecessary to devote entire chapters to: Vegetarianism, free love, technological excess, children, etc. We get it: we should live softly, compassionately, and ride the wind.

The question remains as to why this book is subtitled “A New Philosophy for a New Era.” The concept that discussing ideas should not only be the rubric of specialists in ivory towers is a sympathetic one but isn’t actually presented in this book. The ideas themselves aren’t particularly new, although the conscious injection of Kropotkin’s thoughts on Mutual Aid and anarchist notions of solidarity and free love are new comple-

continued on page 12



Like a Folk Cover of a Punk Classic

Reviewed by Dot Matrix

How Nonviolence Protects the State

by Peter Gelderloos

South End Press, Boston, 2007

181 pages. Paper. \$10.00

Ward Churchill's *Pacifism as Pathology* (*PP*) is an appropriately angry little book. For many people it has been the theoretical validation for a rejection of leftist tendencies towards control and liberalism: it is reasoned, concise, illuminating. It is also a snapshot of and a response to a milieu, that of radical therapy, which had a similar approach to violence as that of many current pacifist activist circles.

How Nonviolence Protects the State (*HNPS*), by Peter Gelderloos (an activist with Food Not Bombs, Copwatch, and Anarchist Black Cross among other groups, and one who has recently been arrested and detained in Spain*) is perhaps best considered a revision and in some ways an update of Churchill's book.

Some of the similarities between *HNPS* and *PP*:

Both authors deconstruct the classic examples used by advocates of non-violence as arguments for the validity of their pacifist ideology – examples like the civil rights struggles led by Dr. Martin Luther King, the Indian independence efforts led by Mohandas Gandhi, and Jewish resistance to the Nazis.

Neither author claims to be speaking about all pacifists, but about a significant dogmatic subset. One of the common pacifist arguments is that violence only begets more violence. This argument ignores the violence that already exists against certain groups of people, and can easily be seen as

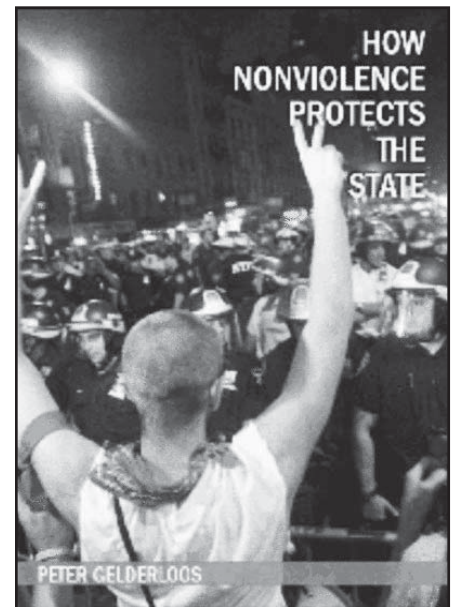
someone's attempt to avoid harm to themselves, like police battery or imprisonment. Churchill cites the self-immolation of a Buddhist monk and a Quaker, both protesting US involvement in Vietnam, as relatively rare examples of pacifists who are demonstrably *not* using nonviolence rhetoric as a way to avoid personal danger. (While these two are examples of bravery and commitment, he also notes that US involvement *increased* after each of these suicides.) From Gelderloos: "When I talk about pacifists and advocates of nonviolence, I am referring to those who would impose their ideology across the entire movement and dissuade other activists from militancy (including the use of violence), or who would not support other activists solely because of their militancy." (p. 8)

Both authors decry the hypocrisy of proponents of nonviolence who accept or even praise violence when it's happening in other countries, for other—usually non-white—people, like in Nicaragua, Vietnam, etc.

Taken at face value, *HNPS* has problems but is a valid attack on the moralism and fuzzy logic of many people who reject violence as a viable tactic under any circumstances. Organized in sections by argument – Nonviolence is Ineffective, is Patriarchal, is Statist, is Racist, etc – the book reflects the scenes that Gelderloos is in, with many quotations showing how people really do continue to use the same arguments (or worse) as those addressed in *PP*.

But it's a little hard to take *HNPS* at face value. This book is reminiscent of those conversations in which someone (perhaps a person of color) says something interesting and then a

minute later someone else (let's say not a person of color) says the same thing. I read *HNPS* with the expectation and hope that it would—either critically or appreciatively—engage with, and perhaps continue (rather than re-hash), the prior work of Churchill. Instead, *PP* is



mentioned only in passing references, almost entirely in the footnotes, and merely to validate Gelderloos' points, which frequently were originally Churchill's points anyway.

HNPS is more linear, more current in some ways, and apparently aimed at people who are working with pacifists rather than at pacifists themselves, whereas *PP*'s target audience is actually the critiqued group, and reflects a deeper engagement with that group. The final part of the essay, consistent with the "pathology" theme, is entitled "A Therapeutic Approach to Pacifism." Aside from being funny (for those of us amused by the idea of presumed

healers being hoisted by their own petards), this section outlines a way for people suffering from pacifism to *heal from* their adherence to non-violence (in the face of pacifism's obvious invalidity). As much as I disagree with the use of health paradigms and medicalized language to explain social problems, at least Churchill did it with flair and commitment.

Among *HNPS*'s flaws are some big assumptions, like that the bombings in Madrid, 2004, caused the withdrawal of troops by Spain, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras and hence were more effective than all the non-violent protests around the world (21); that "the use of nonviolence by people of color has generally been a compromise to a white power structure" (53); and that the use of militant tactics in Seattle against the WTO is what caused the increase in anti-globalization masses (71). Gelderloos argues that it is not the violence of, say, killing a rapist cop that is antithetical to creating a better society, but rather that "certain powerful people who consciously profit from patriarchy actively prevent a healthy culture from emerging." (85) The idea that the problem is limited to certain powerful people, who must be conscious of their profit, is a remarkably unsophisticated view of power and of the complexity of forces that prevent lasting change.

As well, the examples in *HNPS* are dated. The anarchist pacifist I asked about *HNPS* had only read excerpts and reviews, but mentioned the non-violent regime changes in Bolivia, Ecuador, the Philippines, and Argentina, among others. There are of course arguments to be made against these examples (starting with the idea that tactics that work in one place

often won't work in another, and including a discussion about what kind of change constitutes something relevant). But to the extent that the purpose of *HNPS* is to provide debating points for militants, this lack of more up-to-date examples is a failure.

Gelderloos also makes some tellingly contradictory arguments; for example while he correctly points out the flaws of courting the corporate media for nonviolent actions—"the corporate media is as much an agent of authority as is the police force or military" (p. 108), he then goes on to say that corporate media coverage of militant actions *is* useful—"Because of its imperative principles [never defined], corporate media cannot ignore a bombing as easily as it can ignore a peaceful protest. And even though the media will slander such actions, the more images of forceful resistance people receive through the media, the more the narcotic illusion of social peace is disrupted." (111) The ideas that the corporate media can be used to promote real change, and that to rise up, people just need to be shown that resistance is possible have been around for centuries, and have so far proven to be inaccurate.

There is still this open question about how we measure effectiveness. Gelderloos is right to criticize the reforms apparently won by pacifism as being part of state strategy and/or recuperated by the state.

The sorriest aspect of pacifists' claim that the independence of India is a victory for nonviolence is that this claim plays directly into the historical fabrication carried out in the interests of the white-supremacist, imperialist states that colonized the Global South. ... India is a

neocolony. It is still exploited by Euro/American corporations (though several new Indian corporations, mostly subsidiaries, have joined in the pillaging), and still provides resources and markets for the imperialist states.... the exploitation and the commoditization of the commons and of culture have deepened. Moreover, India lost a clear opportunity for meaningful liberation from an easily recognizable foreign oppressor.(13-14)

But using the same criteria requires acknowledging that none of the wins for *our* side (even extremely broadly defined) have been long-lasting or deep enough to satisfy. Haiti, the Spanish Civil War, Kronstadt, the Paris Commune, the most that any of these events are for us is examples of a potential for a different world. They cannot be called successes. That is the one aspect of the pacifists' direction that strikes a chord—the idea that to make truly lasting change we have to start thinking in fundamentally different ways.

* To support Gelderloos, email shimagism@yahoo.com

continued from Riding, page 10

mentary ingredients to this brew. Instead philosophy is evoked as the project we are taking part in by reading the book, but by little else. What Marshall calls philosophy reads more like a personal manifesto complete with the individual quirks, history, and inclinations of the author. From a less talented author this would be called a rant.

NOT THE WHOLE STORY, JUST THE NICE BITS

Reviewed by A. Burkin

**Come Dungeons Dark:
The Life and Times of Guy Aldred,
Glasgow Anarchist**

By John Taylor Caldwell
Luath Press, Barr 1988
290 pages. Paper. 6 pounds 95p

Come Dungeons Dark (CCD) is an account of Aldred's life written by his comrade John Taylor Caldwell. Born in 1886, Aldred's life spanned remarkable, tumultuous times: the Boer War, the Russian Revolution, WWI, the Spanish Civil War, WWII, and the Cold War. Raised by his mother in his grandparents' home, Aldred was influenced by his grandmother, a strict, regular churchgoer, and his grandfather, an atheist and Victorian radical. Guy Aldred began his public life as a boy preacher, and even though he dumped his religious faith and became an atheist in his youth, he never lost that pulpit-oratory style. As an adult, Guy was a powerful combination of the unbending sense of moral rectitude usually associated with religious crusades joined with an unquenchable desire to enact economic equality within society.

The first part of the book carefully maps the stages of Aldred's moral metamorphosis from bible-thumping boy preacher to anarchist, and these chapters are invaluable in understanding Aldred's temperament. By age ten, Aldred "formed an Anti-Nicotine League among his classmates," and later he pledged "not to indulge in strong drink" (9). At sixteen, he contemplated a career as a preacher, and preached every chance he could. But his curiosity and quest for knowledge eventually brought Aldred to the Rev-

erend Charles Voysey, the former vicar of Healaugh, and now a Theist, who'd basically been booted out of the Anglican church for heresy. Aldred moved from Christianity to Theism (a belief in the existence of one or more deities). From here he shifted to agnosticism and then to atheism, preaching as the Minister of the Gospel of Freethought, later changed to the Gospel of Revolt (39). By nineteen, Aldred was attending meetings of the Social Democratic Federation, and his fiery speeches from a speaking platform at Hyde Park drew large crowds. Soon, he was asked by The Freedom Group to contribute to *The Voice of Labour*, and "this led him to the anarchist club in Jubilee Street" (43).

Aldred was particularly drawn to the ideas of Bakunin but "always opposed to Kropotkin." Aldred felt that "Kropotkin had abandoned his revolutionary Bakuninism and had adopted the position of a respectable suburban intellectual, propounding bland theories and becoming the patron of drawing-room anarchism." According to Caldwell, Aldred believed that "mutual aid was a preserving, binding force, essential in society; but equally essential, and complementary to it, was the seeming contradiction, the dynamism of rebellion, the explosive force of insurrection." Consequently, Aldred, who'd always been a leader "felt that there was no place for him in any existing group. He must form his own"

(52), and in 1907, he co-founded the Industrial Union of Direct Action (IUDA), the Communist Propaganda Group and the Bakunin Press. Aldred believed that his work should be "educational ... with a strong agitational bias (67). While he often referred to himself as a communist and a socialist, today we would most likely call him an anarcho-communist for his belief in the abolition of the state, capitalism, and the wage system in favor of workers' councils.

Aldred really hit his stride in WWI, a period marked by his constant anti-war activities and his refusal to be conscripted. As a consequence, he was court-martialed no fewer than four times. He served over three years in prison for his beliefs, and was finally released in 1919. Caldwell covers Aldred's passionate, uncompromising anti-war activities along with the abysmally poor treatment of conscientious objectors.

As an adult, Guy was a powerful combination of the unbending sense of moral rectitude usually associated with religious crusades joined with an unquenchable desire to enact economic equality within society.

Caldwell also covers Aldred's permanent move to Glasgow, the establishment of the Strickland Press, and Aldred's many other concerns — a citizen's advice bureau, the tight-knit inner circle of the Aldred group (Jenny Patrick, Ethel Macdonald, and John Caldwell), and

Aldred's multiple attempts to be elected to parliament as an anti-parliamentary candidate.

The first 210 pages of *CCD* concerns the first forty years of Aldred's life—the

years 1886-1926—while the last seventy pages cover the years 1927-1963 (his last thirty-six years). The fact that such a small portion of the book is devoted to the last half of Aldred's life is not a result of a lack of achievement in these years. Aldred remained remarkably active in the Glasgow anarchist scene until the day he died. Given that Caldwell joined the Aldred set in 1936, and so was on hand to record Aldred's last decades in great detail, the abbreviation of the last half of Aldred's life is not for lack of information. Perhaps the key can be found in Caldwell's two-part autobiography *Severely Dealt With: Growing up in Belfast and Glasgow* and *With Fate Conspire (WFC)*, which talks more critically of Aldred's politics and practice. Caldwell, who died in January 2007, originally sent to publishers a two-part biography of Aldred: *The Red Evangel* (the title of a speaking tour conducted by Aldred), and *CCD*. *WFC* details that the publisher requested these two volumes to be compressed into one, so *CCD* is an abbreviated version of Caldwell's original vision.

In *CDD* Caldwell painstakingly records Aldred's early moral development by detailing the people in Aldred's life who became "moral signposts," but Caldwell does not critically address areas of Aldred's life that remain problematic: his anti-parliamentarian activities, his relationships with Sir Walter Strickland and the Duke of Bedford, and Aldred's relationships with fellow anarchists.

Aldred ran for political office seven times. To some of us, the idea that an anarchist would actually run for a parliamentary office (even if he does promise not to toodle off to Westminster if he wins) just sticks in the throat. For those who support the don't-vote-it-only-encourages-them

position, running for any government office is a hideous mistake. Following the conclusion of WWI, Aldred adopted what he called the "Sinn Fein Tactic." This referred to a tactic used by Sinn Fein for the 1918 General Election in which Sinn Fein candidates were elected but did not "go to Westminster, but assembled in Dublin ... declaring that British Troops on Irish soil were invaders." So Aldred ran as an anti-parliamentarian candidate pledging to not take his seat in Westminster. This would allow, according to Aldred, an opportunity for propaganda through "challenging the parliamentary authority of the capitalist state" (192). Many anarchists would (and did) question the wisdom of Aldred embroiling himself in politics, and in fact while Caldwell in *CDD* does not question Aldred's political candidacy, in *WFC*, Caldwell makes it perfectly clear that Aldred's decision was highly unpopular with group members and that it also soaked up their already meager sources.

Caldwell spends some time explaining Aldred's relationship with Sir Walter Strickland, a man given to charitable impulses. Opposed to the advent of WWII, initially he intended to "launch a peace campaign" (233) with Aldred's help, but Strickland died before he could enact his plans. *CDD* does not address

the fact that prior to Strickland's death, Aldred had accepted Strickland's offer to be the executor of the anti-war fund of an estimated 210,000 pounds. As it turns out, thanks to Strickland's bad investments, Aldred inherited about

3,000 pounds and founded the Strickland Press with the proceeds. Caldwell reveals in *WFC* that Aldred would have preferred to name the venture The Bakunin Press, but it's implied that naming

the publishing business after Strickland was a stipulation of the will.

Aldred maintained a relationship, which amounted to having a patron, with another member of the British aristocracy, the Duke of Bedford. Aldred and Bedford were both against WWII. Aldred published numerous items for Bedford, and Bedford even had a column in the monthly issue of Aldred's last journal, *The Word*. The Duke of Bedford is barely mentioned in *CDD*, but in *WFC* Caldwell details that Aldred asked for a loan from Bedford and was referred to the Bedford Welfare Estate System. Soon afterwards, the Duke asked Aldred to close Strickland Press and suggested the group members move onto his estate rent-free with the condition that he would set them up in business as long as it had nothing to do with propaganda. This entire humiliating episode is missing from *CDD*, and instead the book merely states that Bedford and Aldred remained on friendly terms. Caldwell's autobiography makes it perfectly clear that the Duke of Bedford seemed to regard Aldred as some sort of pet project—the resident revolutionary. Since Aldred was uncompromising in his relationships with other anarchists, and refused to work with anarchists with whom he had ideological differences, it seems odd that he could maintain long relationships with two members of the British aristocracy—an institution that he hoped to help demolish. Even though Aldred was an anarchist, and ran an anarchist publishing company, he compromised his value system with these relationships in order to keep his publishing concerns afloat.

This brings me to the other glaring omission from Caldwell's biography: Aldred's relationships with other anarchists. It's certainly not a requirement for an anarchist to work well with others. But at what point does one's inability to establish working relationships with other anarchist groups indicate a serious problem? At what point does establishing a tight-knit anarchist group that is not particularly amenable to outsiders

The very best biographies deconstruct the intriguing space between seemingly contrasting values in the lives of subjects. It is significant that Caldwell did not address the conflicting issues in his subject's life.

become detrimental to anarchism? He quarreled with (amongst others) the Freedom Group, Kropotkin, and Emma Goldman. While we can accept that ideological differences existed between Kropotkin and Aldred (after all Kropotkin alienated many anarchists with his pro-WWI stance), and Aldred and Goldman (he believed she cashed in on her youthful activities and her fame, and sat on her laurels later in life), it's not so easy to accept some of the treatment meted out to others who joined the Aldred group. In *WFC*, Caldwell describes situations in which other members were ignored, or never fully accepted. Jenny Patrick, for example, treated Caldwell abominably, and some of these incidences of bad behavior seem to be the direct result of hierarchy within the group. In *CDD*, Caldwell argues that the group worked as "a family unit" (234) with no wages. But, conversely, in his autobiography, Caldwell does not seem to be viewed as an equal; he remained on the fringes of the inner circle—tolerated rather than accepted.

Caldwell records that one critic labeled Aldred a "one-man band" (193). There seems to be little merit to this accusation when reading *CDD*, but in *WFC* it's clear that Aldred overrode the feelings of the group on the subject of his continued political candidacy. A major split occurred in the Anti-Parliamentary Communist Foundation (A-PCF) as the result of Aldred's use of the "ballot box." The A-PCF (formerly the Glasgow Communist Group) "had uncompromising anarchist traditions" (222) when it came to electioneering, and this conflict resulted in Aldred's departure from the A-PCM. He took some members along with him, founding The Workers' Open Forum. Problems continued between the A-PCF (the organization later changed its name to the Anarchist Federation) and Aldred. Frank Leech, the secretary of A-PCF, invited Goldman to speak in Glasgow, and while Caldwell attended the meeting, Aldred did not. In *WFC*, Caldwell describes the contents of a conciliatory letter Aldred

wrote to Goldman. While Aldred stated he would post the letter, he never did. *WFC* also describes the deteriorating relationship between Aldred and Leech. The venom between the A-PCF and Aldred became so bad that Captain Jack White (an Irish anarchist and labour organizer who co-founded the Irish Citizen Army and later fought with the CNT militia in Spain) arrived in Glasgow to act as an arbitrator in an attempt to initiate a reconciliation between Leech and Aldred. *CCD* offers just the bare bones of this incident, whereas *WFC* offers more details of the event, and the fact that Aldred was working on a manuscript regarding his treatment by anarchists since he moved to Glasgow.

Just why Caldwell failed to critically address negative areas in Aldred's life in *CDD* remains open to speculation. The very best biographies deconstruct the intriguing space between seemingly contrasting values in the lives of subjects. It is significant that Caldwell did not address the conflicting issues in his subject's life. Caldwell was fiercely loyal to Aldred and nursed him (and Jenny Patrick) until their deaths. Did he want to present only the positive about Aldred in the biography? Did love and loyalty overcome the personal humiliations Caldwell suffered? Did he come to see his past experiences in a different light? Or is the absence of these details purely a matter of space and the need to condense *CCD* into one volume?

Guy Aldred accomplished more in his lifetime than seems humanly possible. He was an indefatigable, tenacious man, an amazing force. Always contentious and always controversial, he left behind an impressive body of work, pamphlets, and articles, and the fact that he remained active and fighting injustice to the day he



died does him great credit. We should—to paraphrase Capt. Jack White—follow him as far as he can take us. *CDD* is an invaluable resource in understanding the political formation of Guy Aldred, but *WFC* fills in the gaps left by a perhaps too-tactful biographer. There is much to be learned from both books, and while the former leans a little too much towards hero-worship, the latter presents the flawed relationships between anarchists who by their very nature are strong-willed, independent thinkers and capable of the most solitary actions.

Defined by NegativeS

Reviewed by Clayton James

Anarchy and Art: From the Paris Commune to the Fall of the Berlin Wall

by Allan Antliff

Arsenal Pulp Press, Vancouver, BC,
2007

213 pages. Paper. \$23.95

Making stencils is the closest thing to art that I do, and I've been making them as a hobby for the past few years. A stencil is a blatant example of positive and negative space. The positive space, the mask, is the material that holds the stencil together while the negative space is the

area where paint will end up. There are two ways of creating the stencil. Creating borders around the positive space lets the negative space fall away while focusing on the negative space, which means cutting out that area and creating the positive space. The image can be the same with both methods, but the way of thinking about the image changes.

Anarchy and Art, the most recent of Art Historian Allan Antliff's efforts to bring more attention to anarchist art, is a series of essays in which he creates positive space. He draws borders around art that he defines as anarchist, letting other types of art fall away. The begin-

ning quarter of his book outlines the ideas of classical anarchism. Using Kropotkin, Goldman, and Proudhon, Antliff makes a case for the role of the artist in revolution and within anarchism. He outlines how anarchist art tends towards aesthetic diversity: "the artist's creative freedom goes hand in hand with a politics that refuses power over others or hierarchical relations that would dictate

what is and is not acceptable" (14).

In Antliff's discussion of the art of Henri Lebasque, he presents the ideas of classical anarchism.

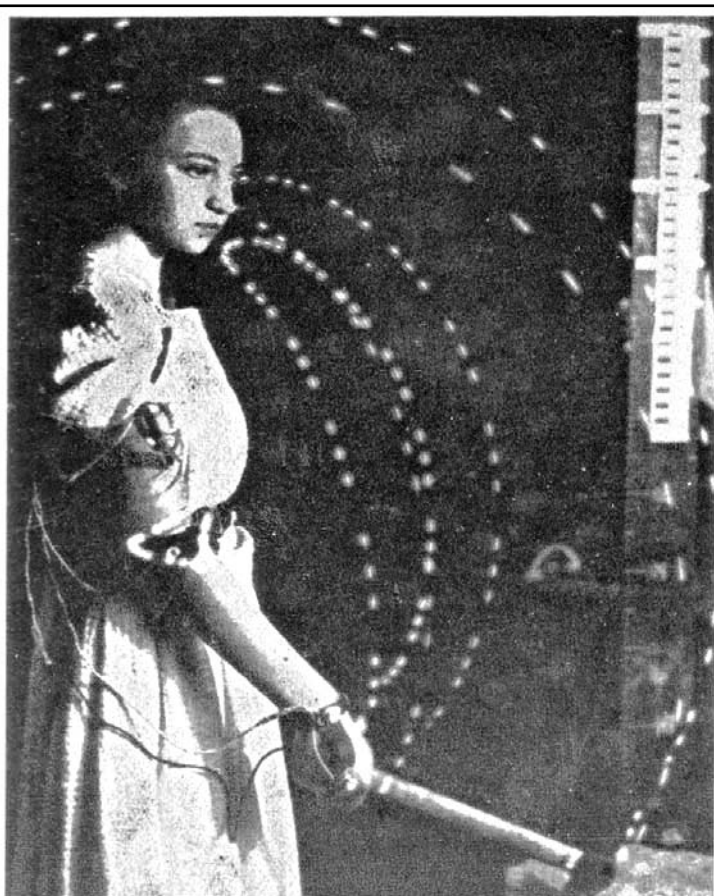
Henri Lebasque's lithography, *Provocation* (1900), distributed by Les Temps Nouveaux, bears testimony to the kind of marginalization awaiting them (the unemployed) in the great marketplaces of capital. A stark critique of starvation in the face of capitalism's bountiful plenitude, the provocation is the commodification of bread, humanity's most basic sustenance. A child stands weak and listless, staring at loaves displayed in a brightly-lit shop window; business prospers while the child is hungry (40).

This piece and its description exemplifies the perspective of classical anarchists, who lambaste capitalism for the poverty it induces.

While presented as an anarchist history, this book also looks at artists who reject anarchism in favor of Marxist rigidity. Antliff spends a time looking at constructivist theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold (a Communist Party member and producer of plays for the Red Army) and "proletarian poet" Alexei Gastev.

Gastev spearheaded a state-financed program to introduce the latest form of labor organization, known as scientific management, to the Soviet Workforce. Developed in America, scientific management, also known as Taylorism, was a system of labor coordination which trained workers in efficiency of movement, breaking down work into easily executed tasks which enabled managers to speed up the pace of production exponentially (101).

Both men sat on a board of scientific management production and produced propaganda plays that encouraged ef-



Alexei Gastev, Scientific Management Motion Study Photograph, ca 1925. From Rene Fulep-Miller, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism*, 1927.

ficiency in the work force. I don't understand why Antliff decided to include these artists in his survey of anarchist art. They obviously have little to do with anarchism, and their project seems to be to create a more efficient capitalism.

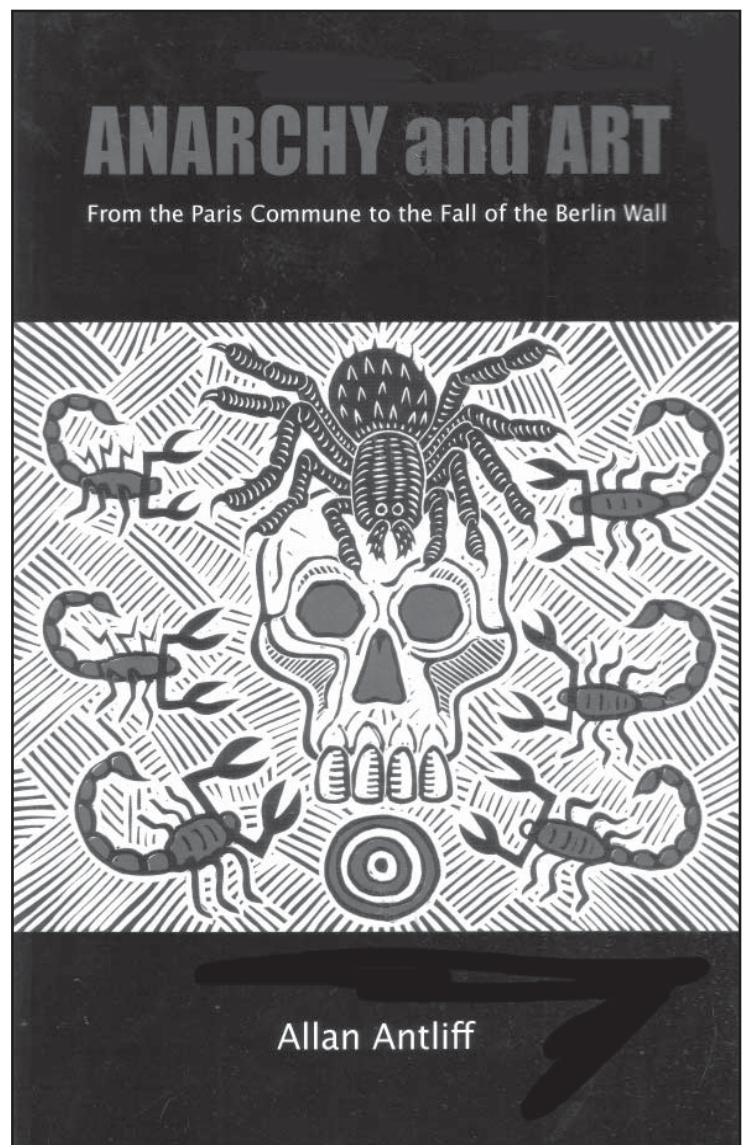
In his closing chapter Antliff finally focuses on artists I am familiar with, like the informative look at Gee Vaucher, member of the punk band Crass. I was particularly interested in the historical background on Vaucher's pieces from the album "Yes Sir, I Will," which gives those pieces more context and power. In the spring of 1982 Britain went to war with Argentina in the Falklands, a small collection of islands near South America. The British smashed the Argentinean forces in the three-month operation. After the war, British soldiers would return home to massive Tory-induced unemployment. In an exchange that could represent the stoicism and can-do attitude so desired in cannon fodder, Prince Charles remarks to a soldier who has been horrifically burnt in the Falklands War, "Get well soon," to which the soldier replied, "Yes sir, I will." Vaucher's poster for the album reproduces the text of this exchange with a tabloid newspaper photograph of the incident. The spectacle of the horribly disfigured soldier spoke volumes about the grotesque inanity of a dutiful working-class victim acquiescing to authority by indulging "his" Prince in the comforting fiction that he would ever "get well" (184).

Antliff also briefly touches on the collage artwork of Freddie Baer, whose pieces have been published in *Fifth Estate* and *AJODA*. Born in Chicago, in 1952, Baer was active in a number of Chicago-based anarchist organizations before moving to San Francisco in 1978. She began donating collage work to the anarchist press in the early 1980s and her illustrations appeared frequently in *Fifth Estate* throughout that decade (189).

Unlike Antliff, rather than creating borders, I prefer to work from the negative, cutting out the working material,

focusing on the negative space. Talking about what Antliff represents in his book is no more interesting than talking about what he excludes. Antliff notes contemporary artists such as Baer, Vaucher, and Richard Mock but leaves out other contemporary anarchist artists like the surrealist-influenced Ron Sakolsky. Antliff's foray into anarchist art should by no means be seen as comprehensive. Furthermore, he focuses on

individuals to explain history. While putting the art pieces into some historical context, he ignores, for example, the Situationists' critique of the larger context of what it means to be an artist under capitalism. More anarchist in spirit than most anarchists, the Situationists critiqued artists as specialists who tended to reflect and produce commodity society. Art is not integrated into our everyday lives but is a separate activity which we contemplate outside ourselves. This critique continues to be very influential and important theoretically, and the absence of any mention of its impact is a serious omission. An-



archist art as described by Antliff does not avoid this criticism, remaining as it does in the sphere of art, a fragment separated from life, built from a center of abstract values. While as anarchists we find these abstract values compelling—*liberty, freedom from poverty, the rejection of work*, etc—they are just as alienated and recuperable as any other abstractions.

Only a Nod

Reviewed by Dot Matrix

**A Problem of Memory:
stories to end the
racial nightmare**

by Taylor Sparrow
Eberhardt Press, Portland, 2007
185 pages. Paper. \$10.00

If you are looking for a current, accessibly written book that talks about the history of US racism against black people, doesn't demonize all white people, and gives some examples of projects for education reform, this could be the book for you. The author spent some time in a class in Douglas High School (in the 9th Ward of New Orleans), and examples from that class provide descriptions of where some kids are right now in their suspicion and boredom with school (and presumably with their options in general). The history of British colonization of Scotland and Ireland gives context to the history of Black people in the US. And projects like Students At the Center (SAC), Young People's Project (YPP), and the Algebra Project are given as

examples of people making a system that works for students—apparently in hope that such an educational system will encourage students to make a better world.

This book gets some important things right: a) schools are not failing but *succeeding* at their goal (which is to manage and create people who believe they have no options); b) that this is true regardless of the economic background of the students (although the tactics might be different for different classes); c) that saviors and charity don't actually create serious change, and d) that memory is a big deal.

But if you're looking for deep thoughts about memory and history and how we address or experience being cut off from our past, or stories that might actually (as promised) end some nightmares, then this book will disappoint.

The book's most significant weakness is that it conceives of race as black and white. Asian people are not mentioned once, and native and latin people are thrown in as "and them too." While of course engaged readers can make some connections, this lack indicates unsophisticated thinking about race and power. Race here and now is about so much more than Manichean "your team vs my team". And the rhetoric of race, especially in activist circles, has so far to go to coherently address the issues of what is currently called "internalized racism" that it was very disappointing to have this book be so simple on this facet of the topic.

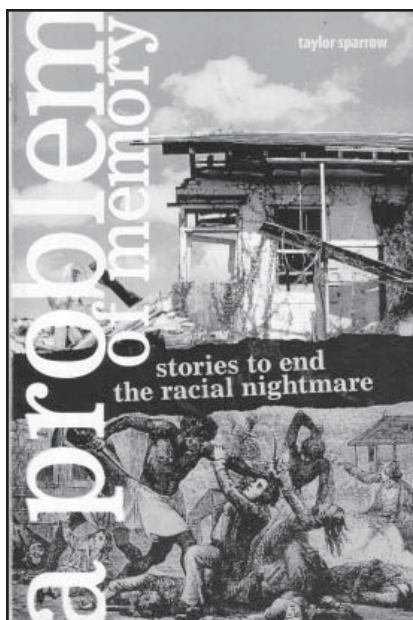
APoM's most ironic failure is in its nod to a hopeful future. If educational projects like SAC, YPP and the Algebra Project are the best hope for a better future, how are they different from multiple previous education reform projects? History has shown that these kinds of projects are so easily integrated into the status quo as to be swallowed without a ripple. A quote from one of the author's mentors, Kalamu Ya Salaam: "Unless and until [disenfranchised youth] can honestly recognize and confront their own realities, they will never be able to truly transform themselves

and their communities." Of course, the rub is that what some people mean by transformation is *really* not what others mean. Educational projects are a fine liberal goal, one that is easy to find support for since it is a deeply-held liberal concept that "more information will solve all problems." There have been multiple efforts to empower students through various levels of student participation, from students organizing against wars to members of radical groups becoming teachers to effect change from within.¹ A brief foray into a library reveals that in past decades there have been many high school students who were articulate about the racism and classism of the school system *and* who had hope that society could be changed. The efforts that are cited in APoM are working at getting students just to that level of analysis (by giving them skills and confidence), and there is no evidence (when and if they get there) that any more change will be effected than was 35 years ago. The question of reform vs. revolution, of what makes change, is only alluded to in this book, and the allusions don't make a compelling argument. The author's failure to acknowledge the history that exists here is in direct contradiction to the title of the book.

Finally, there is always a push and pull to memory. Remembering where we came from is crucial to knowing where we are, but we also best remember what best suits us or what we best understand, and what we best remember doesn't necessarily help us to create different ways of being. Taught to be within structures that despise both us and what we long for, we are not necessarily capable of remembering the things that might be most important to who we want to be. This conservative role of memory is another nuance that is never acknowledged here.

The title of this work gives a nod to significant and powerful topics, a rich menu, but then offers up potato chips and miniature cucumber sandwiches, leaving the reader not starving but ready for something more.

¹ Prairie Fire Organizing Committee, just in my own experience, had four or five members who became teachers in the Bay Area.



An Anarchist Sensibility, Deeply Embedded

Reviewed by Ron Sakolsky

Revolutionary Letters

by Diane di Prima

Last Gasp, San Francisco, 2007

160 pages. Paper. \$15

Poetic letters drenched in still glowing fractals of revolutionary light. Calling to us across the decades in a personal voice that is alternately challenging, rebellious, angry, proud, strong, questioning and philosophical; sometimes all at once. Here is the poetic evidence of a life lived freely in verse and in the moment, whether searching restlessly for sparks of anarchy amidst the sad corridors of American conformity or basking indulgently in the radiance of the utopian anarchist dream.

Originally published back in 1971, *Revolutionary Letters* saw four editions between that date and 1980, with each new printing containing letters written in the intervening period. And now this touchstone book has been reissued with 23 additional poems written over the last 20 years which di Prima has personally selected for the occasion, including contemporary poetic rants about the War on Terrorism and celebrations of the myriad forms of resistance to global capital.

Steeped in anarchy, the book was originally dedicated to her maternal grandfather, Domenico Mallozzi, who was a strong influence on the young Diane, and a “friend of the great anarchist dreamers of his time,” such as the Wobbly, Carlo Tresca. His family home contained sepia portraits of both Dante and Emma Goldman. It was a place where ideals meant something and where conversation often turned to Giordano Bruno and Sacco and Vanzetti. The very first poem in the book, “April Fool Birthday Poem for Grandpa” is dedicated to him and recalls one of his more visceral manifestations of thundering “anarchist wisdom.” In it di Prima remembers a watershed incident from her youth and thanks him:

for
pulling my hair when I
pulled the leaves off the trees so I'd
know how it feels

Though living in the Bronx, he never forgot his old country connection to nature or his blood pact to pass it on to the next generation by condemning all forms of domination, not only in the political and economic realms, but in the natural one as well.

Ever since shedding her childhood, di Prima has lived her life as an artist. The way in which she conceived of her artistic relationship to poetry in *Recollections of My Life As a Woman* (Penguin, 2001) is a key to understanding her personal association with utopian anarchism. In that book she says of her life: “To be an artist: outcast, outrider, and explorer. Pushing the bounds of the mind, of imagination. Of the humanly possible, the shape of human life.” In short, what anarchists call “demanding the impossible!” It is imagination that is at the crossroads between anarchy and poetry, and di Prima outlines the embattled contours of the hoodoo revolutionary dreamscape while reminding us of our own agency as history makers:

history is the dream of what can be,
it is
the relation between things in a continuum
of imagination

THE ONLY WAR THAT MATTERS IS
THE WAR AGAINST

THE IMAGINATION

ALL OTHER WARS ARE SUBSUMED
IN IT

and no one can fight
it but you/and no one
can fight it for you
(Revolutionary Letter #75)

Of the nine of her poems that appeared in the seminal 1994 volume, *Visions of Poesy: An Anthology of 20th*

Century Anarchist Poetry (edited by Clifford Harper, Dennis Gould and Jeff Cloves, Freedom Press, 1994), five of them came from *Revolutionary Letters*. While the latter is clearly di Prima's most overtly anarchist book, it avoids the sectarian hairsplitting that often passes for analysis within the anarchist milieu and instead immerses itself wholeheartedly in the spirit of revolt. The book's genius is to offer us a way of seeing anarchy, and ourselves as anarchists, in the brilliant flashes of poetic insight that distinguish this book from much anarchist writing today.

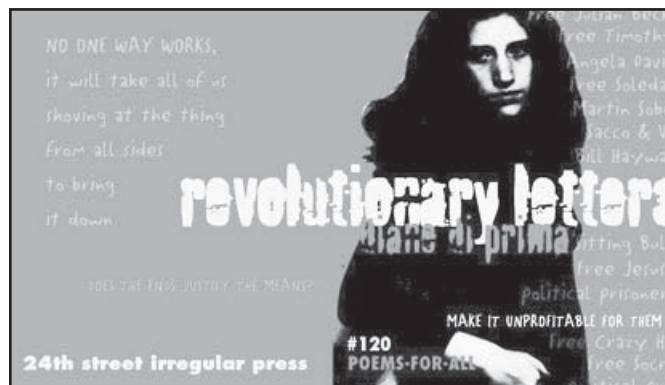
To be a rebel sometimes involves questioning what claims to be revolutionary, and this is the essence of the anarchic sensibility deeply embedded in *Revolutionary Letters*.

“Be careful,” di Prima warns us:
the tale, so often told in revolutions
that now we must
organize, obey the rules, so that later
we can be free. It is the point
at which the revolution stops
(Revolutionary Letter #48)

And what is the point at which it begins? As early in the book as “Revolutionary Letter #1,” di Prima conveys what it means to be an anarchist at a gut level:

I have just realized that the stakes are
myself

Later in the book, detouring an old Wobbly maxim, she adds a welcome and complementary note of spontaneity



to the flava of what it means to engage in revolutionary action in a twenty-first century context:

*don't mourn
don't organize
strike and move on*
(*Revolutionary Letter #88*)

So ends one of the book's newer poems, written in the aftermath of 911.

In the previous "Revolutionary Letter #69," she had pointedly affirmed:
*ALL RESISTANCE IS
TRIUMPHANT RESISTANCE
The moment of revolt is the moment of
victory.*

And in "Revolutionary Letter #15," di Prima had urged us to question the false hope associated with left-liberal activism as just another form of abdication:

*forget to negotiate...
you are not
demonstrating you are fighting
a war, fight to win...
take what you need, 'it's free
because it's yours'*

And then in "Revolutionary Letter #18," she takes it to the next level:

*if what you want is jobs
for everyone, you are still the enemy,
you have not thought through, clearly
what that means*
*remember
you can have what you ask for, ask for
everything*

Uncompromising, yes, but not narrow in her analysis. Her strategy is refreshingly eclectic:

*NO ONE WAY WORKS, it will take all
of us
shoving at the thing from all sides
to bring it down.*
(*Revolutionary Letter #8*)

Anticipating the current anarchist critique of civilization by decades, di Prima's aim is to shed poetic light on the subject rather than to engage in rhetorical one-upmanship:

*not western civilization, but civilization
itself
is the disease which is eating us
not the last five thousand years, but the
last twenty thousand
are the cancer
not modern cities, but the city, not
capitalism, but ism, art, religion, once
they are*

*separate enough to be seen and named,
named art,
named religion, once they are not
simply the daily acts of life which bring
the rain, bring bread,
heal, bring
the herds close enough to hunt, birth
the children
simply the acts of song, the acts of
power now lost
to us these many years, not kill-
ing a few white men will bring
back power, not killing all the white
men, but killing
the white man in each of us...*
(*Revolutionary Letter #32*)

What does it take to "kill the white man in each of us?" In "Revolutionary Letter #33," she poses this as a poetic question about "the primal" in what today might seem like "future primitivist" terms:

*how far
(forward is back) are we willing to
go...*

Then, taking on the hipster voice in "Revolutionary Letter #34," she playfully throws down the gauntlet:

*hey man, let's make a revolution,
let's
turn off the power, turn on the
stars at night*

Civilization, for her, then, is at the crux of the "war against the imagination." Beyond the devastation of global warming and oil wars, poetic justice demands that we confront the trap of civilization. Even if, like di Prima, we live in such oh so civilized cities as San Francisco, we must always remember that, at the most basic level, to have the night sky shrouded in the artificial light of civilization is a desecration of the earth's own poetic light. It is pulling the leaves off of trees on a grand scale.

Like the Loba of which she has written elsewhere, di Prima seeks to conjure up the spiritual energy we need to sustain ourselves in revolutionary struggle. As a buddhist she urges us to get beyond our egos and see the folly of the materialism that is rapidly destroying our psyches and the very planet that is our source of life. With our socialized egos as with everything else, the urge to destroy is a creative urge for anarchists. In "Revolutionary Letter #12," di Prima reminds us:

*every revolutionary must at last will
his own destruction*

*rooted as he is in the past he sets out
to destroy.*

And in "Revolutionary Letter #17," she refuses to let anyone off the hook:

*We will all feel the pinch...
the planet will not bear it...
even the poorest of us
will have to give up something
to live free*

Wisely, di Prima cautions us that whether we choose to think of ourselves as serious and somber individualists adhering fervently to the correct anarchist line in isolation or we romantically conceive of ourselves as beautiful bohemian losers, the end result may merely be cynicism and despair. As an antidote, she points out:

*we are not alone: we have brothers in
all the hills
we have sisters in the jungles and in
the ozarks
we even have brothers on the frozen
tundra
they sit by their fires, they sing, they
gather arms
they multiply: they will reclaim the
earth*

(*Revolutionary Letter #29*)

She urges us not to submit:
*Be strong. We have the right to make
the universe we dream*

*ALL POWER
TO JOY, which will remake the
world.*

(*Revolutionary Letter #51*)

Anarchist revolution is a journey of making and remaking. There are many stops and starts along the way and there is no end, only another horizon ahead. In the utopian anarchist process, the dream animates the revolution at every step of the way. Each revolutionary letter in the book is a piece of that dream, and that is why they all continue to burn so brightly in our collective imaginations. Every one a small act of revolt, a letter bomb of defiance. Collectively they become like the light at the end of the tunnel, heralding the moment when the tunnel itself comes tumbling down, and the next leg of the journey begins. Each poem whizzes by like a shooting star in the night sky, briefly pointing "the way home," then disappearing from view, but, when experienced together, they constitute a marvelous meteor shower of insurrectionary imagination.

What Do Streams Want?

Reviewed by Aragorn!

endgame, Volumes I & II

by Derrick Jensen

Seven Stories Press

New York, NY

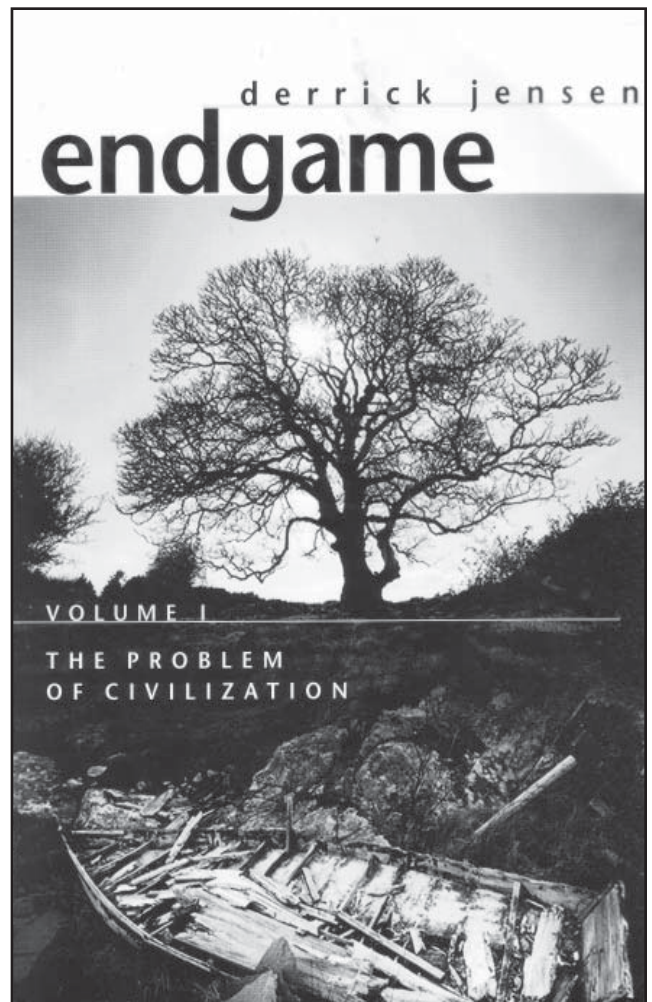
929 pages. Paper. \$18.95

Prior to the release of *endgame* there was quite a bit of buzz about the book in anti-civilization circles. The expectation was that this book was going to make explicit Jensen's previous flirtations with anarcho-primitivism (for instance his widely republished interview with John Zerzan from *The Sun*). Volume one was going to make the strong indictment of Civilization, volume two would discuss how, exactly, to bring civilization down. *endgame* was expected to be an anarcho-primitivist manifesto by someone who is a skilled writer rather than a philosopher, student, mail-bomber, or propagandist.

If we agree that it is a desirable goal to expose more people to anti-civilization ideas we have to agree that we cannot control the mechanisms by which this happens, and we have to accept that political (as in specifically anarchist) anti-civilization arguments carry a double burden that just isn't for everyone. Footnotes make for compelling arguments for some, not all, readers. Jensen isn't a writer of literature, or one whose works are particularly dense, but he is readable for an American audience. You can pick up one of his books, read two (or two hundred) pages and put it back down. For many readers this ability to interact with the text on an ad hoc basis corresponds nicely to a short attention span. You do not have to set aside hours of time to get something out of *endgame*. There is enough repetition to guarantee you will catch the salient points.

That said, this book did not need to be nine hundred pages. If the goal was to produce a jargon-free book presenting the case against civilization and the methods by which civilization will be defeated, the book could have been one hundred pages and just as—if not more—powerful. Several years ago during a presentation, Jensen was talking about why he was working with the publisher Chelsea Green rather than a more mainstream publisher and he made it clear, in no uncertain terms, that the fact that CG did not cut down his page count was a central issue for him. At the time Jensen took his page count as a matter of pride. The author (vain and persnickety) is in struggle with the ideas that he is presenting.

It goes without saying the Jensen believes that destroying dams is a necessary precondition to saving (or reviving) the salmon population. He has said this several times during every presentation he has given and in past books. In *endgame* he devotes several hundred pages to this uncontroversial idea. This is Jensen at his worst: repeating for effect ad nauseum. At his best—which we see quite a bit of in *endgame*—he is a politically motivated journalist who skillfully steers great interviews. One of the best examples of this is provided in Volume 2, where he shares the result of his attempts to query fishery biologists



on the question of the long term effects of destroying dams:

I'm wondering if you can be very explicit about the damage caused to rivers by catastrophic dam failure, whether that failure is anthropogenic or natural. What are both short-term and long-term effects? How will the river be one day afterward, one year, one decade, fifty years, one hundred years? Are there gold-standard studies that have been done on this? To be

clear: I want to know what precisely is the damage done by catastrophic dam failure. (627)

The responses, as you might suspect, reflect the dilemmas of many trapped wage-earners who chain a passion into a career and suffer for it the rest of their lives. Many of Jensen's respondents were entirely willing to talk about the life-cycle of rivers and about the specific details and time frames by which dams should be removed. Conclusion: Dams should go and here are the facts, or at least the people who have the facts, to prove it.

The answer to our questions about what to do can be found from the earth directly. Literally.

The argument at the core of Jensen's *Twenty Premises* (which comprise most of the first 500 pages of *endgame*) can be paraphrased thus: *Civilization is not sustainable, cannot be redeemed, and was created, and is maintained, by violence. To end civilization we (the great We) will have to resist it, probably by violent means.* Those who prefer Marx to Abbey would probably frame the problem as being one of Capitalism, others would possibly call the problem one of Power, but Jensen's critique is familiar to his readers. It is modern romanticism informed by the armed struggle groups of the sixties and seventies and by the deep ecology movement. It is primarily directed at a perceived (liberal) audience and isn't so much a scholarly defense of his Premises as a presentation of a particular perspective, arguing for a certain set of actions. This perspective—that there is something worth naming called Civilization and it is a problem, that violence will be involved in the solution, and that the material (rather than spiritual) world is primary—is a challenge to one who hasn't heard the perspective before and doesn't have their own set of terms to describe the problem and the solution.

His solution, on the other hand, never

really materializes. Outside of talking specifically about river reclamation, the promise of *endgame* as a manual for the end of civilization is never more specific than throwaway lines about resistance capped with statements like, "I'll leave the rest up to you." He ends up demonstrating that he is stuck in the same place that most radicals today are: the heart may be willing but the mind doesn't really have a clue about what to do.

If you believe him, and he does state the case frequently enough that it is hard to say that he doesn't believe himself, then the answer to our questions about what to do can be found from the earth directly. Literally. What does a stream desire? Sit next to it and listen to it. It will find a way to tell you. Have a problem with coyote eating your chickens? Talk to them about it. Many radical and liberal commentators sneer at Jensen's perceived spiritual arguments. They call the lack of objective verifiability "mysticism." They dismiss the similarity of Jensen's arguments to native arguments as saying more about his attraction toward natives than the reasonableness of his arguments.

And they have a point. Jensen is a west coast environmental writer, not a redneck pissed off about the destruction of the only thing he knows, nor a traditionalist living in reservation squalor. When Jensen writes about his first-hand experiences (and successes) talking to the earth, it reads like other New Age authors speaking about the same subjects. But guilt by association should work both ways.

If we want to blame Jensen on the one hand for seeming like a well educated cosmopolitan liberal who is in touch with the earth, we have to accept that he is also echoing people with unquestionable links to life-ways that did converse with Wakantanka and that did not separate themselves from the food they ate, the ground they walked on, etc. Spiritual beliefs are a consistently difficult thing to present to a secular audience that has understandably negative reactions to the Abrahamic religions. This difficulty is apparent even in Jensen's writing, which takes a utilitarian perspective on the topic.

He says "if you want to know what the earth wants, you listen to it," not "you should practice a lifeway that entails these rituals, includes these social roles, and practices these rites."

How does the secular world express strong feelings of affinity and disgust, anger and despair? It appears that expression of feelings is delegated to politicians, to the media, or perhaps to a blog. Jensen is trying to make a break from this kind of mediation through his writing. Perhaps the question merits asking whether writing itself is a secular kind of detachment, but the effort is clearly there. Talking to a stream about what it desires is a very different political practice than saying that one should have an *unmediated personal connection to the natural world* without any particular advice about how one would have it. In a world of utter atomization and isolation, what arguments can we really have with someone's expression of a connection that they truly have? The secular world doesn't have a response to this human need and for all of its derision against traditional, spiritual, and even religious practices, fails entirely at satisfying the needs of anyone who doesn't believe in the secular program.

Jensen is not an anarcho-primitivist and this book is not the expected manifesto on the topic. Instead Jensen mixes the identity politics of Audre Lorde, the pro-guerilla methods of Ward Churchill, and the critique of civilization from John Zerzan to popularize these ideas for an audience that would not be able to access them otherwise. In the argument between the medium and the message, it is possible to see Jensen's ideas as being compromised by his style, but it is his style that has attracted attention to him in the first place. Few authors can successfully convince their readers to pay to read chapters of their book while they are writing them, few environmental authors are attracting crowds outside of green business seminars, and few popular authors treat anarchists with enough respect in their pages to be confused for one.



Anti-Franco Activism



After the Spanish Civil War

by Barry Pateman

As you get older you find yourself doing more and more of these events and it's quite sad as well as quite heartening in many ways. I remember speaking 20 years ago in Conway Hall, in London, about 50 years after the Spanish Revolution, and it is somewhat haunting to think that that generation of militants are now dead and gone.

So tonight I want to talk about the anarchist resistance to Franco, from 1939 onwards. Before I do that I want to say two or three things, because some of the things I say may sound rather harsh and critical of the CNT (and I'm not really going to talk about anything else apart from anarchism). So if it sounds harsh, it's simply to try and be realistic. I am not particularly cruel or thoughtless or heartless or smug. It's very easy for all of us, 70 years onward, to say clever statements about it or think smugly about it or try and use it as a debating point. The truth of the matter is that probably if you look at the 20th century, the anarchists, both in the CNT-FAI and the FIJL (the libertarian youth), and the anarchists who were not involved in those organizations, came nearer to creating a revolutionary change in everyday life than anyone else ever did.

Those years in Aragon, Barcelona, and the Levant were probably the high watermark of possibility. The anarchists involved called it "a living utopia." They touched something that you and I can only dream about and talk about. They actually did it for awhile. No matter how awkward, how ungainly, they achieved something in their life that you and I are trying to do every day and not achieving. And because they did that, because they changed everything that made up their lives, because they took individual-collective responsibility, and they changed patterns that had been locked into their brains for centuries, and they

Because the Spanish anarchists took individual-collective responsibility, they changed patterns that had been locked into their brains for centuries, and they were aware of the potential in each person that could flourish and grow, we must keep looking at and thinking about Spain.

were aware of the potential in each person that could flourish and grow, we must keep looking at it and we must keep thinking about it. Spain isn't going to go away, and we'll always return to it as anarchists, thinking about what we can learn and what we can do to make what they did real. And I for one, would very much like it to be real, rather than some intellectual ideal, or something to talk about over three pints of bitter.

When the Civil War/Revolution ended, there were two main areas where the anarchists moved to: France and from France to Mexico. And it's those militants who stayed in France that I want to talk about today. They settled there and were repatriated into concentration camps, both in France and in North Africa. Conditions were horrendous. Many of them broke out, but within the camps themselves they also began to reorganize the CNT, to try and bring it back to life, to keep it going not only for those in the camps but for the militants who hadn't left Spain; they tried to revive it in Spain. You must remember the CNT had always been persecuted; the CNT had had periods of being underground, so it wasn't a totally new experience—though this was a far more brutal underground than they'd ever had before. And what they did was to carry the problems that the CNT had not been able to deal with into those camps and into exile.

By the way, we would be foolish to underestimate the psychological effects of exile. There is an enormously potent story by Ethel Mannin, the British novelist, called *Refugees*. Ethel Mannin had spoken on the same platform as Emma Goldman in London and had supported the CNT-FAI, and one of the sentences that you read in that story, it's haunting. Rodriguez, one of the militants, says, "Our

days which had been so full, so full and busy, were now just empty," as they sat in the cold English suburb with nothing to do and nowhere to go but just to sit and talk and talk. And that effect in itself was brutal.

But they also carried some problems, which were what the CNT had done in Spain. Some people in the CNT organization had moved into government. They'd actually had an anarchist Minister of Justice, which seems a bit of an oxymoron.

And this caused tensions.

The two basic tendencies, crudely put, are in 1939, "Look, we're carrying a lot of ideological baggage. We have to accept the fact that this is now a different period. We can't just carry on pretending and being pure, we have to adapt to circumstances." That tendency Rudolph Rocker called the woodpecker tendency. You sort of knock at trees with your beak and hopefully the tree will be crushed and fall down, or your beak will fall off, or a hawk will come and bite your neck.

The other tendency, roughly speaking, was called the Redskins, which was a disparaging term at first, referring to these being Pure Anarchists. "We are anarchists, we don't take part in government, there are no exceptions to that. If there are exceptions to that, what are we? We're anarchists who don't take part in government today, but we might tomorrow, or we might next month, if circumstances change? How will people support us and grow with us, if we change our own mind and become no more other than any other political grouping?" Their opponents in the CNT called them Redskins, but it was also used in the sense of Uncontrollables. The Catalan youth, when they began to fight the communist party in 1938 and '39, taking revenge in hit squads, called themselves Redskins proudly: "we will not submit to you and we will not even submit to our own organization." But we have to remember that no matter how much the CNT was split and riven apart, the truth is that there was an enormous loyalty to that organization, a loyalty that people were going to die for and had died for, and would continue to die for, for a long time. No matter how many problems, and pressures, and contradictions it had, it was for most anarchist exiles their symbol, it meant them, it was them, who they were. You could speak to the anarchist exiles in London, "Who are you?" "CNT" "CNT" "CNT, that is who I am, that's what I believe in, me." That's who they were.

One of the themes I really want to touch on tonight, by the way (and this is really the beginning of a much larger interrogation), is organization. What type of organization allows anarchists to flourish and grow and to challenge and break-down capitalism? Is that possible? Is there an organization, an organizational structure, that will do away with bureaucracy, that will challenge bureaucracy, that will keep ideas fresh and alive, and will not allow influential militants to take control? That seems to me one of the biggest questions that anarchists ought to still be asking.

The CNT reconstituted itself in Spain as the MLE, the Libertarian Movement in Exile. There were anarchists already in action groups (in Garcia Oliver's phrase) in Galicia, they'd been in action groups in Galicia since 1936, when the fas-

He, like many of the guerillas or action group members, had a cyanide pill, and he bit into it as he was caught, because they didn't want to give up names. They had no desire whatsoever to give up names, and they knew they would under torture.

cists, or the right wing, took over in Galicia and the left was defeated. Anarchists moved to the hills and formed themselves into groups. And in the early '40s, one of first acts was for many anarchists to join the French Resistance. There are one or two famous anarchists who did take part in that struggle. There's a book in Spanish by Antonio Tellez, about Ponzán, quite a legendary guy who smuggled Allied airmen who crashed in France, or anti-fascists from France, into Spain. Especially after '40-'41, when Franco began to move away from Hitler and Mussolini, when he began to take a far more neutral line and Spain became a neutral country, Ponzán used his anarchist connections and smuggled over 1,000 people. He was recommended for the George Cross by the English government. He was eventually captured in '42-'43 and executed in the forest with others militants.

Ramón Capdevila Vila, who we'll finish our talk with tonight, fought with the Spanish resistance groups with the French Liberation; he was called "Captain Raymond."

These are just two examples of many...

Across the French-Spanish section of the Pyrenees, much of the French resistance was coordinated by anarchists. Only one book I think has even touched on that, and it's a whole story waiting to be told.

As soon as war ended, there was a whole insurgent movement back into Spain. Guerrillas from all action groups moved in, spearheaded by the Communists with some anarchist support; they moved into Spain in '45, hundreds of them, thousands of them in small units, and were beaten back very quickly. It was quite a massacre. By now most of the anarchist action groups were based in France in and around Toulouse, and between '47-'52, there was a huge increase in anarchist action groups moving into Spain, across the Pyrenees into Barcelona, and wherever else they could. It was a pretty exciting time for at least two years. Until about '49, action groups controlled most of the roads around Barcelona. But by '49, they'd been beaten back, and probably by October, November, December, there was a wholesale slaughter of anarchists in Spain in the interior.

The aim of the anarchists was very simple: they were in there to re-organize and rebuild the CNT. They were sent in by the MLE (the anarchists in

Toulouse) to do that. They did it by robbing banks, getting money, getting hold of printing presses, and printing *Solidaridad Obrera*, printing whatever papers they could and getting the message out to people that “we’re still here. We ain’t going anywhere, we’re still here.” Their second aim was to take on the Spanish state, to actually take on and try and dispel the atmosphere of fear, and yes, of terror, that still permeated most of the villages and towns of Spain. They blew up pylons. They assassinated people they believed to be in the secret police and police officers who had been especially cruel, who tortured anarchists or innocents. In 1955, slightly later, when Spain was trying to gain international respectability, Facérias’s group bombed all the embassies they could, of countries that were supporting Spain’s admittance to the United Nations, saying “you’re allowing a totalitarian, fascist country in, you’re voting for this, we’ll bomb your embassies.” Their main problem was to try and get money and guns.

It’s always edgy and dangerous to talk about too many paths and tendencies, but from ‘50 to ‘52 onwards it’s almost silence, if

we look through the records. And it’s always struck me as somewhat strange that Sabaté, who most people know through Antonio Tellez’s lovely book (*Sabaté, Guerrilla Extraordinaire*), took a couple years off to work on his garden. And I don’t say that lightly. You can’t be an urban guerrilla all your life you know—you have to have a rest.

By about ‘52-‘63 onwards, the main action is centered on Catalunya and Aragon. And on August 6th, 1963, the last of that generation of anarchist fighters who took part in the Spanish Revolution, who fought in the Durruti Column, who fought in the French Resistance, Ramón Capdivila Vila, is shot dead. Antonio Tellez says of Capdivila that he was shot by the Spanish state and buried by the CNT. The CNT refused

to admit that he was one of their members yet he’d been a CNT member all of his life and fought for 27 years against Franco and the right wing.

Two or three things, then. First of all, who were these people in the action groups? Well, let’s take a few of them and consider who they were. Nearly all of the people by the way, had fought actively in the Spanish revolution. Jaime Pares had been a bodyguard, fought in the Durruti column, and was killed in ‘46, fighting with Sabaté.

Joaquina Pita Dorado: she was a CNT woodwork union member, and she’d fought against the Stalinists, the Communist Party, during the May Days; she was part of *Luz y Cultura* [the Light and Culture group]. She exiled in France to Toulouse, and joined the Third of

May Group, and moved into Spain, took part in many operations, and was eventually captured and served 15 years. The 15 years more or less killed her. She came out of prison very, very ill, and died later on in Paris. She’d been fighting for 25 years.

Miguel Garcia Garcia, who has published memoirs, had also fought with the Durruti column, fought in Barcelona, and in 1942 was trained as a forger by the British. He would create papers for British airmen who were coming into Spain, so that they would get passes through. And he used that skill later on to help Sabaté. He was imprisoned and served 20 odd years. He was sentenced to death and was re-

prieved I think an hour before the rest of his group was shot and killed. He then came to England, which is where we met him, and was very active in forming the [Anarchist] Black Cross.

Catalá, “The Cat,” was another famous one. He was a guide, and of course being a guide was a critical job. How are you going to get from Toulouse to the Pyrenees and then into Barcelona? It was enormously difficult. Guides were rare, and they were men and women who had enormous skill and were prized, and whenever they died or were shot, it had a huge effect. It had a huge effect on morale and on possibilities. Catalá was, I think, arrested and died in ‘49. He, like many of the guerrillas or action group members, had a cyanide pill, and he bit into it as he was caught, because they didn’t want to give up names. They had no desire whatsoever to give up names, and they knew they would, under torture.



Francisco Llopert (“El Quico”)



Joaquina Dorado (4th from right, top row)
with fellow prisoners



Jose Facérias (“Face”)



Francisco Diez ("Catalá")

They are just some examples. There are countless others. I hope for more books to be published so that we can have a real living history of these people.

By 1955, Sabaté went to go into France again, and he went to the CNT, and they said "No. We don't want you in there anymore. We don't want any groups in there, 'cause we're having a real problem." The real problem was that of

course as the Cold War increased, Franco and Spain became a far more acceptable country to the rest of the world. Even by the late '40s America was giving Franco enormous aid. The French government was putting real pressure on the CNT. After all, the CNT was in another country. There was an unwritten rule that none of the militants took part in actions in France 'cause if they did then the weight of the French Government would come down. But certainly the CNT said "no." And Sabaté, Facérias, and others went in anyway. They even formed another group called the Anarcho-Syndicalist Groups and produced a paper called *El Combat*, which ran for four issues.

Sabaté was later killed in 1960. Facérias, when he's shot dead, is never ever counted as one of their dead by the CNT. He was seen as being too daring, losing too many men, and causing too much embarrassment.

If nothing else, all we've had so far is a list of names and a bit of a sketch of some people. And as Pietro Gori said, that's a decent thing in itself. Flowers for the fallen. These men and women lived a life that they believed was the right one. They put their anarchy into practice, they put who they were, and how they lived their life, into a way of operating and a way of working and a way of being that challenged the totalitarianism of Franco. And it's right we should know them. It's a fucking disgrace that we don't. And I say that quite seriously. It's a disgrace that their names still aren't here. How come they've been disappeared from history, not just by the right wing but by the left as well? How can that be? They never gave in. You might quarrel or argue with their tactics but their bravery, their commitment to anarchism, is still almost unparalleled.

Examples abound. Two men from the *Los Manos* group caught, after Wenceslao, one of its organizers, is shot dead. They could have easily just said, "Wenceslao, he did this, we didn't." They said "No, we did everything, us two. We did it. Execute us." Dignity like that is almost awe-inspiring and quite frightening when you read about it. But there are things still that we must consider. First of all there's the problems of, as I said earlier on, organization. The CNT, and I'm saying this now as carefully as I can, from about 1946 on, [hit] bottom. And I don't mean that cruelly. It sat in France, almost paralyzed and riven by factions, trying to work out what was the best line, what was the best thing to do, how can we be, what's the best thing to do? If you look at the

history of the CNT in this period, in one year I counted 60 commissions, 60 special committees set up to work out their next strategy. It paralyzed the action groups. Let's give an example, and this is seriously to do with organization. In October, November, December 1949 the action groups lost probably 50 of its finest members and at least a thousand of its supporters. In three months. The National Committee that was underground in Spain had disappeared. So the *Los Manos* group, under Wenceslao, were sent in by the MLE to find out what was happening, find out how these people are being killed, to find out where the National Committee was and to get it working. They got to Barcelona, Wenceslao is killed in an ambush, the others are picked up. They'd been followed all the way from France. The CNT in exile is riddled with informers. The Spanish police are working hand in glove with the French police. Every time an action group member leaves their house, the French police tell the Civil Guard. They're followed into Spain. They're set on, and they're arrested. There're notes from a group called *Los Anonimos* [The Anonymous Ones] in 1950, who are the action group prisoners in the Model prisons in both Madrid and Barcelona, and they call themselves anonymous because they don't want to live on their reputations. And they write back to the CNT and they say: "Don't do this anymore. Don't send us people to set up an organization that we can't keep going. The enemy are so well informed that they know which of us will fight back when stopped and which of us won't. They will know who to say 'stop' to and that group will stop. And they know who to just open fire on because they know that that group is a fierce one and will fight back straight away. They know us that well, they know us that well.

"Now stop this. Think about our organizational structure. Think about who we are and what we're doing, because if you don't we're all going to be fucking dead. Now think carefully."

The CNT in exile had all sorts of tensions about it, all sorts of arguments about it but couldn't quite work out what to do. Men were being sent to be slaughtered.

Secondly, the MLR, the Movement for Libertarian Resistance, set up in '47-'48, had some wonderful people involved. Tom Mix was the nickname of one, and Facérias, and Capdevila, all joined it. The idea was simply that we are fighters, we are all people in action groups in

both rural and urban Spain. We have a certain task to do. We need to break down the fear that is coming against us; we need to fight and encourage working class resistance. That's what we need to be doing. We have skills and expertise; let us do it. Let us do it.

We also are aware, they said, of the problems that could be. Listen to some of the things that they say when they write to prisoners.

"The obviously real danger of us turning into an authoritarian organization can be overcome only if our members are people of moral integrity."

In other words, they were already trying to work out how they would not become this elite cadre, this leadership group, the tough top men, the "real" militants. The awful crap from the Weathermen, "Who's more militant than us?" No, they knew that they had to behave in an anarchist way. They were trying to grapple with those problems of being anarchists underground with the whole of the country looking for them. In small groups of six people, these action groups were offering mutual support and aid. As Miguel Garcia says when someone asks "was Sabaté the leader?" Miguel spits at him, "we have no fucking leaders. We have no leaders. There are six of us. We make a decision, it's collective and we do it. And then we try and link it with others." And they really did.

But the CNT could not deal with this kind of organization. They said, "we don't want this. You're going to confuse people."

This is not to criticize totally the CNT. They're in a foreign country. They're trying to work in impossible circumstances. But they're becoming rigid; they're becoming ossified; they're becoming everything they don't want to be. And they don't know it. That's one of the sickening things about getting old. All of a sudden you can't get out of bed in the morning, and you didn't know it till then. That's what's going on for them. They're not deliberately ossifying, they just are. All that wonderful spontaneity, that richness of their earlier days, the individual initiative, the group initiative, is being frozen. However radical an organization is, if it loses that, it becomes like



Laureano Cerrada

any other one. And because the anarchists in the interior were good militants and because they loved the CNT and because they certainly didn't want to criticize the CNT, they said, "okay, we'll stop and we'll fight with you; we will stay with the CNT and we will follow your line." And time and time again, that would happen.

In 1962, a group called the *Defensa Interior* [Internal Defense] was set up by the CNT. It consisted of seven militants. To put this nicely, the CNT had been influenced very much by Cuba. For the first time armed action units had managed to bring about a revolution, and suddenly it seemed possible that this could happen in Spain. So the idea of the DI was

very simple. We're going to foment popular unrest, we're going to fight terror with terror and we're going to freeze the government of Spain. And the DI did something quite strange, under its main organizer, Octavio Alberola, something that the earlier Spanish movement had not done: it took action outside of Spain. The first thing it did was to put a bomb in St. Peter's church in Rome, and the second thing it did was to put a bomb in Cardinal Spellman's house in Chicago. They said, "If you're going to speak or trade or collude with Spain, this is what you're going to get." And they broadened the struggle immensely, bringing in a whole generation of European youth. In 1964, the 11th of August, Fernando Carballo Blanco and Stuart Christie were arrested for trying to assassinate Franco. In 1966, the First of May Group is formed. And in 1967 when Blanco and Christie come out, Albert Meltzer joins them in creating the Anarchist Black Cross, with a two-fold aim: to get food and provisions to anarchist prisoners and to support the armed resistance in Europe. The first member they get out is Manuel Garcia Garcia, and so the story continues.

And it will carry on right through the '70s, '80s and even '90s, after the death of Franco.

As I said, there are always going to be easy snipes that we can make 20, 30, 40 years on. But I want to finish by talking about two people and then make one final point.

I want to talk about Laureano Santo Cerrada, who in 1976, at the age 74 was killed by a fascist in France, shot dead in a café. Cerrada had been a prominent CNT member in 1947, and in 1948 had organized the famous, or the infamous, attempt to kill Franco by bombing him. They'd got an airplane and flown it over the regatta where Franco was. Cerrada and a couple others had arranged it. He'd also had a lot of other ideas. He was quite a wealthy man, and decided that he was going to print lots and lots and lots of false currency and flood Spain with it, thereby completely destabilizing the government. In 1962 when the *Defensa Interior* is formed, things are so bad and there's so much tension that both he and Gomez, who were the chief architects left from the old movement, were both suspicious, they think that DI is an attempt to take over that spontaneity and that richness, things are so bitter.

But there's something else about Cerrado, which is the issue of what it's like to be illegal. Cerrado hung around with criminals. He hung around with criminals for two very good reasons. Criminals could get into Spain a lot easier than anarchists could. And criminals could get guns and currency and papers a lot easier than anarchists could. So that's who you dealt with and that's



Ramón Capdevila Vila ("Wild Boar")

who you worked with. You might need some cars, so you'd find someone who'd robbed some and buy them. That's what you do. He had no compunction about doing that. The CNT expelled him because he adopted undesirable methods. I say that because one has to understand that there is this rigid, puritan, moral view that is consistently held by some members of the CNT. In 1936, '37, they would shoot drug dealers, would kill them, no question. They would execute them on the spot if they saw them in the Barcelona areas. There was a sense that one had to be pure and right and a good sound person, and dealing with crooks was not the right thing to do.

It seems to me that there's still much to be done about how you live a life that's illegal in a pure way. But Santos deserved much better.

And then there's Ramón Capdevila Vila, who deserves his own film. He fought throughout the Spanish Revolution, fought in the French Resistance, and became a brilliant guide. People called him *Caraquemada* (Burnt Face) but his close friends called him *Jabali* (Wild Boar) because he was vicious, he was tough, and he was painfully shy, a loner. He would sit in abandoned monasteries, or caves, for weeks, waiting for the resistance groups, the action groups to come over the hills, to come over from the Pyrenees, and then he'd guide them through the tricky areas. He'd never go into Barcelona. He'd see the lights of the city and say, "there you go, off you go, good luck." He was shot on the 6th of August, 1963. He'd already bombed, two nights before, three pylons, and was out to do some more. When they got his body, they found a cake tin of chickpea stew, a lighter, cigarettes, a cask of wine. That's all he had in the world, he had nothing else. He'd fought forever, for 27 years, for a belief, and ideal, that you and I talk about and try to live in our lives, and he'd done it on his own after his friends had been killed. By '63, he was the only one left. The most successful of the guerrillas in the action groups. It was just Vila, on his own, and he wouldn't give in. He would not give in. And if nothing else that must surely be the greatest obituary you can give to any anarchist: He never gave up. When it would have been easy to give in, he didn't. Between 1946 and 1952 there were at least 6,000 anarchist armed struggle action group people killed and 20,000 supporters arrested. We never found where they were, some of them. They disappeared.

So there are various things I'd like to leave you with tonight. One of them is what I said earlier. These people here, the ones I've


introduced, they achieved something that is almost indescribable; they achieved something that enabled them to see the richness in each of us, and for however short a time, it lived. How we can keep that fluctuating time and make it permanent and revisit it and change it and challenge it but still keep that richness seems to me something we need to think about in the light of the Spanish experience.

Secondly, anarchism is a rich, exciting, thrilling tendency, and it doesn't befit us to condemn, ignore, or criticize other anarchists, or not to give them the dignity they deserve, whether one agrees with them or not. It's just not very sensible; there's enough folks out there who will do that to us, we don't need to do it ourselves.

Thirdly, I go back to the question of organization. How do we work then, to create a better world? How are we going to do it? How are we going to break the beast of capitalism, that's lasted far longer than any of us thought it would do? Are we going to do it on our own? Are we going to go vegan and wear a hoodie, and that's all sorted out, thank you? No, there's a lot more. Can we do it on our own? Can we do it in spontaneous affinity groups? Will it be 10,000 different ways? Do we need an organization? If we do, how can we stop a potentially rich organization, a potentially exciting organization, from becoming ossified and static and rotten as the most reactionary one? Not because those people are evil. When people talk about influential militants, those who ended up betraying the anarchists they tried to represent, some of them, who went to see Companys 70 years ago, some of the people who went there were legends in the CNT. They sacrificed everything. Garcia Oliver had been in exile for years. They weren't just bureaucrats, they were militants of high repute and courage and bravery. And even that won't stop you. Even that may not stop us at the wrong time from making the worst decisions possible. How can we change that? How can we work together with a solidarity that reminds us to say "hold on, let's think this through"? What organization can possibly cope with all those challenges? That's something for us to think about. But it's 70 years since the workers of Barcelona and Madrid armed themselves and beat back the uprising of the right, and then created their own revolution, a richness that we should remember, think about, and respect.



ANTI- IMPERIALISM



The recrudescence of Anti-Imperialism as a dominant theme in activities mounted against the Iraq War and other initiatives of the developed world is nothing new in itself, but it has been carrying an ever-increasing amount of freight. In our time it has become not only the language of antiglobalist politics at a dead end, but even of the Hezbollah theocrat Hasan Nasrullah and the captain of the Russian knouto-kleptocracy, Vladimir Putin. Anti-imperialism as an expression of purportedly radical thinking is both back in fashion, and compromised, as never before.

This article attempts to show some important strands in this devolution...

or ANTI-CAPITALISM

by Burt Green

I.

Imperialism as a term was new to common English usage when it appeared for the first time in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1858, although the appellation *British Empire* had been coined near the end of the 16th century by John Dee. By the end of the nineteenth century, *Imperialism* would be used to describe the policies of all the industrializing states seeking to expand their influence beyond their borders by means of colonization, trade treaty, or outright conquest.

Anti-imperialism, as the literary expression of a systematic theoretical attempt to link imperial policy with the mechanism of the capitalist political economy,^a began as the early 20th century Marxist critique of the process leading to the establishment of overseas dependencies by the older powers of England, France, Spain, and Russia, then recently joined by the rising powers of Germany, Japan, and the United States. Articulated in the works of English Fabian John A. Hobson (1902) and radical German Social Democrat Rosa Luxemburg (1913) was an understanding of contemporary imperialism as belonging to a new period of capitalism^b in which the industrializing powers had entirely divided the world between them and could no longer acquire markets save at each other's expense. The result was predicted to be a period of increasing inter-imperial conflict, which was, in fact, what eventuated. It should be noted that the opposition of radicals like Luxemburg in the German Socialist Party (SPD) was at that point controversial – so thoroughly enamored was its conservative wing of the imperial project of the Hohenzollerns – and contributed to the increasing tensions between radicals and those in the center (eg Karl Kautsky) and right wing (eg Eduard Bernstein) that would finally rupture the party during the First World War.

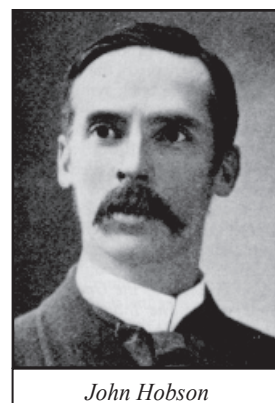
II.

Nascent anti-imperialism as a practical current had less to do with Marxist end-games theory than with the active collaboration of elements in the anarchist and national independence movements in the colonies against the local representatives of imperial authority, some-

times with the support of anarchists, socialists and others in the imperial centers of Madrid, Paris, London and elsewhere, and sometimes in coordination with activists in colonial centers such as Hong Kong or Alexandria.

Early examples of the involvement of anarchists from the metropolises in anti-imperialist movements may be found in the assistance of Louise Michel, in exile after the Paris Commune (1871), to the Kanaki of New Caledonia in their struggle against French colonial rule, and in the presence of Errico Malatesta in Alexandria as a combatant in support of the Pasha Revolt of 1882.

The joint work of Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Spaniards against the decaying empire of Spain near the end of the 19th century offers even more dramatic examples of international collaboration. Both the voluntary and involuntary migration of young colonial intellectuals to the colonial capitals and ultimately to Spain, hastened their encounters with radical critiques of hierarchy and exploitation and with each other – as with the friendship of Filipino ethnologist Isobelo de los Reyes and libertarian educator Francisco Ferrer. Just as the Spanish state sent its butchers in uniform like General Weyler^c abroad, so the radical ideas circulating in the imperial metropolises among opponents of the regimes there, as well as the knowledge of their practical prosecution (as with the mutiny of Cuba-bound troops during the 1895 war), radiated out to the colonies and helped to fuel the independence struggles in those lands. This interrelationship between repressive policies in the imperial centers and their campaigns of suppression abroad was openly acknowledged by those in Europe who tried to strike at the heart of



John Hobson



Rosa Luxemburg



Louise Michel

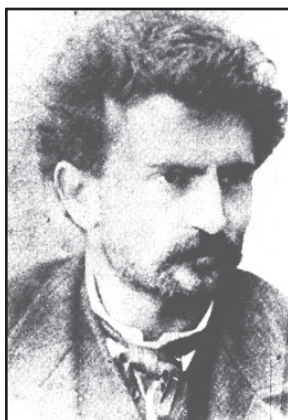
the system as when the anarchist Michele Angiolillo, in justifying his successful 1897 assassination of Spanish Prime Minister, king-maker and reactionary *eminence grise* Antonio Canovas, cited not only Weyler's crimes in crushing opposition to the regime in Barcelona, but also his concentration camps and summary executions in Cuba and the Philippines.

This continued reciprocity of events and influences, domestic and colonial, is further evident in the *Semana Tragica* (Tragic Week) of 1909 – precipitated by a call-up of Spanish reservists to fight in the Second Rif War in Morocco – which saw heavy fighting in Barcelona as trams were overturned, troop trains halted, and churches burnt during demonstrations that denounced conscription as “class warfare” conducted for the benefit of the overseas (*Rio Tinto*) Spanish mine operators. As protest became urban insurrection, barricades went up all over the city and troops from Barcelona, given orders to fire on their civilian fellows, refused. Non-Catalan soldiers however, did carry them out, and subsequently some one hundred-fifty workers were killed. More than 1,700 were indicted for “armed rebellion” with five, among them Ferrer (although not even in Barcelona during that time), sentenced to death during the repression that followed.

The shocks passing through the corpus of Spain's decomposing empire carried over as well into the land of its colonial successor in the Caribbean and Western Pacific, the United States, where the chief executive who presided over America's “splendid little war” with Spain was cut down, like Canovas, by anarchist bullets. Later, in 1917, Americans, including many active in the syndicalist IWW, would go south to the Baja Peninsula to fight alongside the Magonist militia there.

A complementary development, in the appearance of specifically anarchist currents in such distant locations from the imperial centers as North Africa (the first delegation to

participate in an international anarchist congress had done so in 1877) and Mexico, (where Julio Chavez Lopez, a student of the Proudhonist-influenced Greek Plotino Rhodakanaty and his associate Francisco Zalacosta, began peasant expropriations of plantations in 1868 and issued a specifically anarchist manifesto the following year) had also begun to occur and would expand to the countries of East Asia, South



Errico Malatesta

America and elsewhere. Moreover the increase of radical antiauthoritarianism was not only in extent, as more and more regions were exposed to anarchist ideas, but also in depth. Evidence of this evolution in Cuba can be seen in the 1897 denunciation of discrimination against Afro-Cubans by the anarchist journal *El Productor*. Two years later, during the first strike of 1899, there appeared the demand that workplaces be open to “individuals of the colored race.” The next year bore witness to the assertion – on May Day – of the right of people of different races to sit at the same cafes. Together these insurgent tides raised ever more towering waves against the imperial ships of state and the servile states of mind that crewed them, and never more effectively than when they came in support of one another.^d

In 1911, two years after the *Semana Tragica* in Spain, Italy's late entry into imperialist adventurism played out miserably on the sands of Libya with the anarchists at the forefront of the movement against it. As the Italian invasion of this Ottoman territory faltered and degenerated with the mass-murder of Arab prisoners, an Italian colonel haranguing a departing contingent of troops in Bologna was shot by the anarchist bricklayer Augusto Masetti, who shouted “Down with the War, Long Live Anarchy!” Anarchists as well as radical socialists were at the head of the demonstrations and the partial general strike, as well as attempts to prevent troop trains from leaving the Marches (central eastern Italy) and Liguria for the ports from which the troops would depart. Those Socialist Deputies who sat in the Italian Parliament, by contrast, voted in the main for Libya's annexation.

That these flames had not died down three years later was shown in the powerful offensive against the institution of punitive battalions in the Italian Army and for the liberation of Masetti during the *Settimana Rossa* (Red Week) of June, 1914, during which a general strike was launched by the anarchists, the anarchosyndicalists of the USI and radical socialists, among the latter the future dictator Mussolini. The city of Ancona was held for ten days and several small towns declared themselves autonomous republics. Violent clashes took place with strikers and their supporters fighting against the security forces and vigilantes. The immediacy of class war in Italy and progress of Italian producers in organizing themselves as the conscious negation of the bourgeois order, was not however, sufficient to provide a lasting defense either against war, nor to ensure the integrity of the organizations and leaders created during that time from a loss of coherence in the onrushing insanity of nationalism, the headlong march to self-annihilation that was World War One, only a number of months later.^e

III.

With the collapse of the opposition to war among the European socialist parties – and to a certain degree among anarchists as well – at its onset in 1914, and with the subsequent destruction of the workers' movement in Russia by the Bolsheviks, Anti-Imperialism began to assume an altogether different form and function.

As Lenin sang of “national self-determination,” a slogan whose reactionary consequences, as Luxemburg pointed out, would help lead to the Bolshevik Red Terror,^f the resources and people of the Ukraine were effectively signed over to Germany and Austro-Hungary as one of the terms of the “breathing space” purchased for his regime at Brest-Litovsk (1918). Neither was the self-determination of peoples permitted to stand in the way of the later Bolshevik reconstitution of the former Tsarist Empire: the independent guerilla movement in western Siberia and the Makhnovist Insurgent Army of the Ukraine, the last large-scale “Green” rebellions of the Russian peasantry in the provinces of Saratov, Voronezh and especially Tambov (against whom the Bolsheviks used poison gas^g), the Kronstadt sailors, and the Donets miners, were all crushed during 1921-1922. Finally, the open invasion of the neighboring socialist state of Georgia, also in 1922, gave stark contrast between the official position of Lenin's government and its bloody, thoroughly imperial, reality.

Coeval with this process of internal repression and consolidation of power was the curbing of any tendencies toward independence on the parts of communist parties abroad through the means of the Third International, the Comintern. Communist and socialist parties opposed or unresponsive to the dictates of Moscow, such as the German KPD, were split and reorganized by operatives ultimately selected in Russia, at the same time secret military agreements were concluded between the Russian government and the German General Staff, as the Soviet state chose to follow Mr. Rapallo.

The prevailing view in Moscow was that a revolution in one of the countries of the West was the most desirable alternative, and that the Comintern must not be handicapped by Russian interests in working for it; but, pending the outbreak of such a revolution, Russia must natu-

rally safeguard her own interests and make the best possible use of diplomacy and a policy of alliances.^h

This peculiar opportunistic duality between the courting of reactionary military-industrial interests in Germany, the international financial community (which rewarded Lenin for his counterrevolutionary demonstration at Kronstadt with substantial loans) and others, and the simultaneous preparation for the overthrow of those selfsame interests, existed only in policies directed toward the West. There was no consistent complementary policy orientation in the East

because, according to Lenin, the world revolution was to be essentially an anti-imperialist revolution; there would be support for it in the West only among the working-class, lower middle-class, and poor peasantry. Hence the importance of the Communist Parties there. But in the East, due to the fact that entire populations – mullahs, muftis, and feudal landowners included – suffered from imperialistic oppression, they were all to be regarded as potential allies.

At the Second World Congress of the Comintern, both Lenin's theses, which pressed for unconditional support of the struggles of all Eastern nations against imperialism, and the mutually exclusive theses of Manabendra Nath Roy, in which it was argued that only the workers and peasants would effectively lead the anti-imperial struggle (the task therefore being rather to strengthen the Eastern Communist Parties), were endorsed by those in attendance. This epitomized the theoretical incoherence at the foundation of Marxist-Leninist Anti-Imperialism as well as the already present division of interests between bureaucrats with countries and those yet without them. Subsequent events would show just as glaringly the consequences of Lenin's policy – the one that would prevail – in its implementation.

Relations between this first Leninist regime, increasingly concerned with its territorial integrity, and the other, more traditional, counterrevolutionary nationalist states on the Russian periphery accordingly underwent a transformation, and as a result, so did relations with the Communist Parties in these areas.

Before the Rapallo agreement, the Russian state saw in Turkey one of its few possibilities to break out of diplomatic isolation by becoming useful to the newly established government of Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), then militarily engaged with the Greeks in Anatolia. War material was provided to Kemal, but there were no forthcoming political concessions.



Liquidation of communists in China in the 1920s

offensive of futile urban putsches, was the liquidation of the CCP in China's cities and its banishment to the Chinese countryside as the private army of a déclassé political-military elite for nearly two decades.ⁱ

When another of Stalin's alliances of opportunity – the one with Hitler for the division of Poland and a new balance of power in Eastern Europe (which had considerably damaged the standing of the Communist Parties in the West) – went bad in June 1941, the empty sloganeering of Stalinist Anti-Imperialism was quietly put away as part of the price of an alliance with the Western Allies against German and Italy. "Communist internationalism" and Russian foreign policy had assumed a single identity. The redundant Comintern was dissolved in 1943.

IV.

The beginning of the next Anti-Imperialist moment began with the cessation of World War Two and the renewal of anti-colonial struggles in South and South-east Asia and in Africa. This was influenced by, and influenced in turn, the heightened competition between the bloc of bureaucratic capitalist states led by Russian and an increasingly assertive China, and the Western powers, led by the United States, Britain, and France, with their train of client states in tow.

An early key point of this period was the Asian-African Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1955, which gave birth to the so-called Nonaligned Movement. The result of an initiative of a newly independent Indonesian government looking for international support in its conflict with the Dutch over Western New Guinea as well as for the broader policy goals of promoting economic and cultural ties among emerging post-colonial states, the conference was attended by representatives from twenty-nine countries, more than half of the world's population at the time. The entire spectrum of emergent bureaucratic-military capitalism was in evidence, including Nkrumah's Ghana, Nasser's Egypt, Sukharno's Indonesia, and Nehru's India. Debates centered around issues of national sovereignty, racism, and anti-colonial struggle. A ten-point joint declaration incorporating both the ideas of Indian head of state Jawaharlal Nehru and the United Nations Charter promoting world peace and cooperation was unanimously adopted.^j It was agreed that "colonialism in all of its manifestations" was to be condemned, im-

When, after having played a conspicuous role in important anti-colonial conferences, the Turkish Communist Party delegates openly returned to their country, they were stoned in the villages they went through and finally arrested, tortured, and thrown into the sea. The decision to support Kemal over any Turkish communism yielded little result, but was reflected in the absence of further Turkish delegates to the Comintern. Similarly in the Middle East with the cession of the Persian border province of Ghilan, formerly under a nominally soviet regime, to Riza Khan, and the renunciation of support for Persian communism (this with the direct cooperation of Lenin without any protest from the side of Trotsky), Leninist Anti-Imperialism meant support for counter-revolutionary regimes.

The effects of Lenin's policies and the very similar policies of Stalin later on had an even more catastrophic effect in China.

Revolutionary organizations had begun to flourish in earnest in China during the first decade of the 20th century, both in coastal areas like Canton and in the Chinese interior, as in Hunan. By the 1920s significant worker and peasant movements, often animated by anarchist ideas, were fighting against the various authorities who ruled a fragmented and dysfunctional Guomindang (Nationalist) republic, along with semi-independent warlords often in collusion with foreign interests. By mid-decade, through the use of superior resources and the prestige of the seemingly successful Russian Revolution, the operatives of the Comintern were able to place the Communist Party's trade unions in ascendancy over their weakly reformist (Guomindang) and anarcho-syndicalist rivals, at the same time integrating the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) organization into the Guomindang itself. This arrangement led to the inability of the CCP to oppose the coup of Chiang Kai-shek and his backers in the criminal societies and financial circles when, in 1927, they moved against the poor peasant unions in the countryside and ultimately, the Communist trade unions in Shanghai. The result, after an attempted counter-

PLICITLY rejecting both Western imperialism and the policies of the USSR in Eastern Europe. At the same time, the conference was a diplomatic success for Zhou Enlai and his “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.”

The Bandung Conference attempted to constitute a single movement from all the disparate post-colonial states and others in attendance, among them such countries as Japan, Iran, the Philippines, South Vietnam, and Turkey, allied with the West, as well as China and North Vietnam, countries that were part of the East Bloc. Centrifugal forces were greatly superior to centripetal forces, however. In 1959, China seized Tibet. Three years later China and India were engaged in heavy fighting in the Himalayas. In the following years many other nations whose representatives were present at Bandung, among them India and Indonesia, would be involved in large-scale military conflicts with neighboring states or in wholesale massacres of their own ethnic minorities. The solidarity of Bandung was largely ephemeral. The competition between the great imperial powers had simply been recapitulated at a different level among the lesser, post-colonial, “development states,” not superseded.

V.

Through the course of the 1960s and 70s the rhetoric of Anti-Imperialism was most frequently employed by Marxist-Leninist political parties, national liberation movements (proto-statist consolidations of unitary, unilateral political power), and newly established states as a means of presenting themselves in a “liberatory” light, giving themselves and their regimes the broadest possible appeal.^k Two paradigms characterize this period, the “Tricontinental,” an axis of national liberation movements and so-called Socialist states in Angola, Mozambique, Algeria, Cuba and Latin America, and Indochina, implicitly drawing on the backing of the Soviet Union, and the strategic model presented by Lin Biao, then heir-apparent to Mao Zedong in his 1965 article “Long Live the Victory of People’s War.” In the latter, the imperial centers were to be surrounded by insurgent national liberation movements supported by the Socialist Bloc in a grandiose projection of the Chinese Peoples’ Liberation Army’s doctrine of encirclement of cities in a given area by means of the establishment of guerrilla zones of control in the countryside, cutting off communications and strangling supply-lines, eventually bringing about isolation and logistical collapse.

None of this had anything to do with the proletariat,

Although progressive liberals of today generally eschew the language of anti-imperialism for that of a depiction of the present world as one of out of control corporations and rogue governments in need of reform, the other principle constituents, old and modernist leftists and anarchists have all variously made use of the anti-imperialist trope.

urban or rural, or the peasantry, except as incidental beneficiaries of land reform or rudimentary worker protections as might have been found in those Western countries with stable social-democratic majorities. The primary role of workers and peasants was as cannon fodder for the newly elevated Marxist-Leninist elites in their attempts to solidify or extend their political sovereignty, and as providers of the surplus on which these bureaucratic capitalist states were to be run.

Nor did the naming of these development regimes as “socialist,” under the control of putative Communist Parties, do anything to arrest the same dynamic of conflicting national interests that had so quickly reduced the Nonaligned Move-

ment to ineffectuality. Disagreements over the manner in which to confront the West and the speed with which Communism (an absolute party-state control over production, consumption, and all behavior, social and private) might be introduced had led to a break between the USSR and the PRC in 1958-60. Although both states were opposed to the US presence in Indochina as mutual allies of North Vietnam, the NLF in the South and the Pathet Lao in neighboring Laos, rivalry between these superpowers, over competing “liberation forces” in Africa and influence in Korea and Indochina, as well for leadership of the Socialist camp globally, finally led to division-scale combat along the Ussuri River in 1969 and talk of preemptive Russian nuclear strikes. Urban residents in China were instructed to “dig tunnels deep.”

Subsequently one could see numerous further examples, as in the war between the Khmer Rouge (who, in “eliminating the colonial superstructure” with the supervision of their patrons in Maoist China, had engineered the auto-cannibalization of Cambodian society, and more importantly in this connection, had massacred ethnic Vietnamese), and a now unified Vietnam, partially in response to pleas from former Khmer Rouge, and with the ultimate backing of Moscow. The ensuing large-scale, though unsuccessful, punitive invasion of northern Vietnam by the PRC at the end of the decade was the culminating act of this period of inter-bureaucratic capitalist competition unencumbered by Socialist garb.

Concurrently with these signs of advancing decomposition in the East Bloc, the themes of Anti-Imperialism were being utilized in the developed West by the Left, both as a means to address those in the population opposed to the policies of their governments abroad and as a means of establishing a common basis for the mobilization and coordination of disparate groupings for local action.

In the United States, the “united front against imperial-

ism” prevalent during the latter period of opposition to the Vietnam war (1967-1975) provided a mechanism by which to paper-over the organizational rifts and doctrinal differences between Leninist sects on terms of their own, so that a general consensus favorable to their own political agendas could be shaped and criticism marginalized while they competed with each other for dominant positions in the anti-war movement. As these Trotskyist (Socialist Workers’ Party), Stalinist/Maoist (Progressive Labor and the Revolutionary Union, which would later become the Revolutionary Communist Party) and sometimes more exotic (the Weather Organization, for example, or the Labor Committees) sects began to dominate the anti-war movement, the result, unsurprisingly, was the marginalization of the movement itself. More and more people began to stay away from the increasingly empty and formulaic ritual of their marches and demonstrations, tune-out the dogmatic howl of their wooden rhetoric, and avoid the stifling internal tyranny of their bureaucratic organizational manifestations. This ultimately led to the collapse of much of the movement itself.

VI.

In the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union, a period now over for quite some time, it was assumed Marxism-Leninism had been forever discredited and would be incapable of reconstituting or adapting itself to the drastically changed political landscape. Anti-Imperialism, outside the radically narrowed circles of remnant Party Communists on the fringe of capitalist development (eg the Maoist outposts in Nepal, Kurdistan, and the Philippines, and those guerrilla and political/trade-union organizations still in the orbit of Castroism) or their supporters in the developed West and the various Trotskyist groupings, became a neglected prop. Other axes of opposition emerged in the wake of an apparently universal victory of liberal (so-called free market) capitalism, such as those of fundamentalist (typically Islamic) religion and environmental, and especially anti-nuclear, activism. Older more blatant unilateral forms of imperial adventure, even those of a military-punitive nature, as in Bosnia and the 1991 Gulf War, generally receded behind multilateral forms, such as the regional economic zones created by the EU and NAFTA, as well as global institutions for the management of capitalist expansion such as the WTO. The rhetoric of Anti-Imperialism appeared to come only from those trapped in an evolutionary cul-de-sac, unable to engage a reality that had evolved beyond the ability of their language to describe

The reappearance of conflict between older (U.S., European, and Japanese) national-imperial interests (as opposed to conflicts between smaller nations, corporate entities and global agencies of capitalist development) and those of other national economies, either with imperial ambitions themselves, or aspirations to certain kinds of regional hegemony, has recapitulated previous imperialist world orders and made anti-imperialism once again seem a useful-looking weapon to those who would contest this or that empire, as well as Empire in general.

it adequately.

Against the growing number and power of supranational capitalist entities, a new element began to enter into the equation as an opposite and occasionally equal force. Originating both in the Global South with such movements as that of the Zapatista EZLN in Chiapas, and the landless peasants’ movement in Brazil (*Movimento Sem Terra*), and in the mobilizations of demonstrators against “globalization” in the developed world at Seattle and Quebec in North America, and Prague, Gothenburg, and Genoa in Europe, this convergence of movements (especially as consciously embodied in the conferences held by People’s Global Action) began

to emerge as a significant force. Against this grew an increasingly violent and preemptive repression, finally leading to the direct use of firearms in Gothenburg and the slaying of an anarchist demonstrator in Genoa.

Four major tendencies rose to prominence as this antiglobalist movement grew: the progressive liberal (in the US) and social-democratic as exemplified by such Americans as Naomi Klein, Walden Bello, and organizations as *Global Exchange*, and George Monbiot and sometimes those with ties to the official Labour Party in the UK; the remnants of Old Left opportunism, desperate for an issue to pull them out of their irrelevance; the post-modern reformists principally under the ideological influence of the Italian ultra-left (thus, writers such as Antonio Negri); and the practical inspiration of the Zapatistas, such as the *Tute Bianche* (*Ya Basta!*) in Italy, the *Wombles* in the UK and *Attac* in France, and the anarchists, both nonviolent types like those to be found in the *Direct Action Network* and those in the black bloc, often at the forefront of the fighting and often the most openly anticapitalist.

VII.

It was as these antiglobalist currents continued to build, attracting participants and supporters despite growing repressive measures, that the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center took place, and the initiative was once again seized by elites who saw in a “War on Terrorism” an opportunity to rush through their compliant governments the elements of an advanced repressive apparatus to deal with the omnibus threats coming at them, and the themes necessary to dominate the political discourse for some time. However it was

precisely the ambition of this new initiative of the most retrograde of factions in the West based primarily – but by no means exclusively – in the US Republican Party and their partners and supporters, and the freedom these factions have had in pursuing their aims that has resulted in the changed terrain of the present. The armies of this coalition of the less and less willing are mired in both Iraq and Afghanistan with a clear-cut victory less and less likely. The alliances necessary to continue operations there are growing increasingly frayed, and in the case of strategically placed Pakistan, are in actual jeopardy. The American domestic economy is showing signs of serious strain, with the widening ripples of the sub-prime lending crisis accelerating the preexisting decline in living standards for ordinary families already long underway and latterly worsened by the flight of skilled jobs with the onset of NAFTA. To this dissatisfaction is now added a disenchantment with the adventures in the Middle East and Central Asia.

As the moment of undisputed American global dominance begins its passage into history, the material forces that created and maintained bureaucratic capitalism in the former Soviet Union (ie the managerial elite and the security apparatus), and benefited most from its existence (to this group we must now add organized crime) have reconsolidated their grip on the Russian political economy, thanks in part to a virulent nationalism and an alliance with the Russian Orthodox Church.¹ Now these forces have begun to exert a renewed and often heavy-handed influence over their neighbors and trading partners. The EU has cautiously but steadily increased its diplomatic and economic independence from the Americans.^m China is finally achieving great power status at a rate and recklessness that is generating instability and opportunity for other poles of power.ⁿ The reappearance of conflict between older (US, European, and Japanese) national-imperial interests (as opposed to conflicts between smaller nations, corporate entities, and global agencies of capitalist development) and those of other national economies, either with imperial ambitions themselves (China, Russia), or aspirations to certain kinds of regional hegemony (Iran, Venezuela), has recapitulated, to an extent, previous imperialist world orders and made Anti-Imperialism once again seem a useful-looking weapon to those who would contest this or that empire, as well as Empire in general.

With the separation of Anti-Imperialism from a single continuum of

political thought in whose authority it was to assign certain regimes to certain camps (often on the basis of purely tactical expediency), and in whose predisposition the crimes of Western imperialism regularly eclipsed those of the East, the term has now acquired a certain indeterminateness and lack of former specificity. While on the one hand this may presage a radical redefinition of the term and a serious reappraisal of what it and its associated perspectives can and cannot do in the analysis of the capitalist whole and in strategizing its defeat, it is just as likely to provide chaff to cover the maneuvers of the ideologists of Islam, nationalism, and the Left.

Presently on the world stage the rhetoric of Anti-Imperialism finds employment in the hands of competing empires (Russia, China), regional princelings of both secular and religious shadings, local National Liberation movements of the old leftist type and in much of the antiglobalist and antiwar movements. For the first, the complaint of “imperialism” is about the relative size and initiative of an imperial competitor; for the second it is an allegation of either direct interference by one or more of the greater powers thwarting regional aspirations, or interference by great powers on the behalf of a regional rival; in the instance of those National Liberation movements (mostly, but not exclusively, Maoist) still in existence, the more categorical Anti-Imperialism is a sign of minimal foreign backing.

Within the antiglobalist movement today, Anti-Imperial analyses are beginning to take on new shapes determined in part by changed realities of global competition, the changed nature of the contenders, and their respective objectives. Although progressive liberals generally eschew the language of



Protesters in Rostock, Germany, evading resistance by going through fields

Anti-Imperialism for that of a depiction of the present world as one of out of control corporations and rogue governments in need of reform, the other principle constituents (old and modernist Leftists and anarchists alike) have all variously made use of the Anti-Imperialist trope. For the traditional Left, the current turn of events is a revalorization of its analysis and a return of the world to comprehensibility, even as the contradictions and hypocrisy inherent in the bureaucratic worldview still persist. The degree to which this tendency will be able to rehabilitate its reading of Anti-Imperialism and return it to dominance will be proportional to the energy with which it is advanced, its ubiquity, and the amnesia and/or complaisance of the rest of the movement.

As for the postmodern attempt of former autonomists to repackage the antagonisms of former imperialisms as a conflict between an omnipresent Empire and The Multitude, in a “broader, interdisciplinary approach,” it remains trapped by its still fundamentally Leftist conceptual model, its mystified and romantic references to former Marxist-Leninist icons (including Mao’s Long March) and its lack of specificity when talking about the operation of the “new forms of democracy, new public spaces and new forms of community” that are to comprise the new emancipatory social order or transformations in the relations of production. It stops short of an explicitly revolutionary critique of the existing social order, while insufficiently delineating the contours of the new society which will replace it.

Anarchists have been variously influenced by both the above currents, as well as by traditional antiauthoritarian currents (with their longstanding opposition to imperialism) and such twentieth-century libertarian currents in and outside Marxism as those of the left and council communists, groups such as *Socialisme ou Barbarie* and *Echanges*, and the Situationist International with their robust critiques of Third World/Leninist Anti-Imperialism. In addition, anarchist partisanship on the part of the unfolding struggles of indigenous peoples against the invasion and eventual annihilation of their worlds by the global market dictatorship – whether at the hands of Brazilian ranchers or the comprador state-capitalists of Laos – tends to undermine both productivist notions of development itself and also the formerly unassailable status of development regimes, a number of which (North Korea and Zimbabwe among them) are hardly the showcases of Socialism they once were.

While these developments are changing the nature of Anti-Imperialist discourse in the

movement, they have yet to alter the relations of anarchist currents to the forces of either the traditional or postmodernist Left, which often remain more cloaked in ambiguity than a clear understanding of anarchist/antiauthoritarian history should sensibly allow. In neither the recent pronouncements of the Zapatistas or the APPO in Oaxaca, nor those of the antiglobalist movement in the developed countries, has the question of the orientation of the movement to the actual means of production, of an open break with capitalism, been resolved. “National capital,” “local capital,” “fair-trade capital,” are considered to be different than transnational, corporate capital. The present inability to move beyond opposition to Neo-Liberalism to a credible anticapitalism has stagnated theoretical development of the movement and inhibited its ability to effectively challenge the structures of exploitation. Even as inspiring in their preparation against massive and preemptive repression and in their operations in the field as demonstrations in Rostock (where the importance of being able to fight the police in pitched battles was reaffirmed) and in Vicenza have been, the continued lack of theoretical capability on the part of the movement to attack capitalist value creation itself, hence production, and tactically, places of production, has left it short of a revolutionary position.

Despite the shortcomings of the antiglobalist movement, which is coming up much more sharply against the limitations of Anti-Imperialism as an oppositional theme, the anti- (Iraq) war movement, centered for the most part in the US and run almost entirely by progressive liberals (United For Peace and Justice) and Marxist-Leninist fossils (International ANSWER), is even less advanced in its perspectives. Nonetheless, it has managed in the United

States largely to eclipse the antiglobalist tendencies. Antiwar tendencies remain either weakly reformist and often sympathetic to whichever Democratic Party candidate cultivates them the most assiduously, or tied – either directly or by means of front groups – to an oblivious, unreconstructed Party Communism for whom 1989 never happened. In an America which has tried with its “War on Terror” to turn the clock back to the time of an affirmative patriotism and repressive legislation against foreigners and civil liberties, this has created a climate reminiscent of the older oppositions of the past and has been more



...avoiding recognition of the independent interests and struggles of the working class and peasantry...

conducive to the growth of Party Leftist sects. When attempting to set their more militant variety of reformism against that of their liberal competitors, the Leninists have once again used the tactic of Anti-Imperialist contingents, putting themselves in the seeming vanguard of the anti-war opposition. As long as the authentically revolutionary currents do not set up anticapitalist contingents which exclude the operatives of present, past, and future bureaucratic capitalism, this old tactic achieves the desired effect.

VIII.

As long as Anti-Imperialism is presented as the foremost or central contradiction of capitalism, it will have innate limitations which are constitutionally incapable of supercession.

In the first instance, Anti-Imperialism still has to account for the way it was used in the past, and will always for that reason bear the heavy burden of the crimes committed in its name. To those who fought against imperialism in the Philippines and Chile, in South Africa and Vietnam, one must take care to add those in East Germany, Poland, and Hungary, and those who fight today in Tibet.

The uncritical assumption of statist perspectives implicit in the positioning of the organization of the National Liberation Struggle as the revolutionary subject, conceals both the class divisions between the forces that make up this organization – especially those between the bureaucratic class-in-formation on the one hand and the working class, peasantry and those sections of the intelligentsia supporting independence on the other – and the common interest all proletarians have in the elimination of their elites, regardless of nationality. The establishment of sovereign government (that is, a state) as the revolutionary objective, carries with it similarly bourgeois assumptions. It partakes with enthusiasm of the artificial and arbitrary separation in the activities of capitalist national and international political economies created by international law. Anti-Imperialists declare the extra-national colonization of markets, politics, societies, and cultures to be somehow worse or different in essence from the exercise of the same principles of capitalist economy in the country of its origin (a contradiction is not overcome by references to “internal colonies”). They take the borders of capitalist states more seriously, especially in the present epoch, than capitalists do themselves.

On the other side of the equation then, Anti-Imperialism has been a means of avoiding recognition of the independent interests and struggles of the working class and peasantry in the imperial dependencies, save from the point of

The antiauthoritarian movement in the United States has fared no better than its leftist competitors and (for want of resourcefulness, originality and strategic sense) has fallen to tagging along as the rump—even when it leads the march in combativeness—of demonstrations called by the party-Left.

view of distortions created by the advancement of exogenous imperial interests. This lack of proletarian perspective allows Anti-Imperialism to become a weapon to be used against (competing) foreign exploitation without a critique of local inequalities and forms of domination, much less of the political economy as a whole. This kind of Anti-Imperialism is easy

for the likes of Vladimir Putin (the pacifier of Chechnya) and the misogynists of Hezbollah to employ without damage to themselves. It also provides useful ammunition to that most perfect of modern princes, Hugo Chavez, in whom are embodied both the Leftist, pseudomodern authoritarianism of his friend and political patron, Fidel Castro, the Maximum Leader of Cuba, and also the right-wing pseudotraditionalism of fascism, as imparted by his mentor, the Argentine anti-semitic Norberto Ceresole, author of *Caudillo, ejercito, pueblo. La Venezuela del presidente Chavez* [Leader, Army, People, the Venezuela of President

Chavez].°

Recent developments have given possible substance to a positive moment of social critique with such models of liberation as the occupied industries of Argentina and the organizations of residents in Oaxaca as possible replacements for the discredited organizations of Marxist-Leninist inspiration. Moreover, the way that these new organizations of opposition have formed – as results of complex interactions rooted as much in the specificity of the antagonisms in their own societies as from any attempt to resist (exogenous) neo-liberal attempts to restructure their local political economies – does not conform to the old Anti-Imperialist model of National Liberation. These are phenomena which an Anti-Imperialist perspective is only partially able to illuminate and imperfectly explain. Yet, promising as these new formations may be in contrast to those of the past, they face major unresolved conflicts, both with bureaucratic and retrograde elements still within their organizations, and against the repressive apparatus of the states in which they pursue their tenuous existence. They are a long way from asserting any kind of sovereignty over social space, let alone threatening global capitalism. On the other hand, the development of a relatively large antiglobalist movement has established more horizontal networks through which such positive models might be advanced, debated, improved, and supported; a medium more appropriate to the message than a Comintern of dictatorship and doctrine, manipulation and money, agents and assassins.

Imperialism is a contemporary reality and carries with it the ever-present possibility of global war, but it is merely one facet of a conflict engendered by the present evolution of the world system of capitalism, itself rooted in the needs of domestic capitalist economies to expand beyond their borders.

It cannot be seen in isolation either from the internal intensification of regimes of exploitation at work, of surveillance, the reduction of civil freedoms of speech and assembly, the introduction of national, ethnic, religious, or gender divisions for the purpose of fragmenting communities or fomenting regional conflicts between states and would-be states. Even less can it be combated as a separate phenomenon, as Empire, without a simultaneous loss of political coherence. Putting Anti-Imperialism at the head of opposition to capitalism not only plays into the hands of the bureaucracies of the Left and limits itself to the terrain of an unreconstructed Leninist past; it concentrates oppositional effort against a single consequence of the capitalist system, rather than against the system as a whole and its origins in the organization of relationships through which production is carried and values are produced – the true Gordian Knot that needs to be undone to change the world.

The antiauthoritarian movement in the United States, such as it exists presently, has fared no better than its Leftist competitors; for want of resourcefulness, originality, and strategic sense, it has fallen to tagging along as the rump (even when it might lead in combativeness) of demonstrations called by the Party Left, the immense strategic opportunity of the post-1989 aftermath having almost entirely slipped between its fingers.⁹ Its tactic of escalating the level of physical contestation at demonstrations and marches is by itself no different fundamentally from the tactics of the former Weathermen during the period of the Vietnam War, or those used many Leftist manipulators thereafter. Initially successful as the forces of order are caught off guard, such tactics pursued indefinitely as the sole form of contestation leave the activists involved easily isolated and contribute only to the noise level of the Left's ineffectual circuses while reducing the credibility of the black bloc itself. The fetishism of violence leads, not only to greater repression, but to less effective violence. It would seem that American antiauthoritarians have much to learn from their European contemporaries.

Only by staking out its own terrain, planning events on its own and for its own aims, will a libertarian, anticapitalist, movement be able to wrest the initiative on streets and campuses, and in workplaces and homes from the bureaucrats who presently call the tune. Only by proving its principles, its actions, its organization, and its style to be qualitatively different from those of the liberals, Party Leftists and modernist reformers, will the movement for the abolition of capitalism and for a truly libertarian, communist social order be able to change the historical balance in its favor.

Endnotes

a This to distinguish it from the purely literary anti-imperialism of Eduard Douwes Dekker's *Max Havelaar* (1887), or the later attack by Mark Twain against the US military adventure in the Philippines, "The War Prayer." It is not within the capacity of this writer to take seriously the moralizing of the *American Anti-Impe-*

rialist League, of which Twain was a member, along with William Jennings Bryan and Andrew Carnegie.

b Lenin's *Imperialism* (1916), in being subtitled *The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, erroneously suggests an identity of the two. In his Preface, after a complaint on the relative lack of literature when writing this piece, Lenin notes that he *had* had recourse to Hobson's *Imperialism*, which he refers to as "the principal English work" on the subject. Lenin sought to explain the causes of the First World War and the collapse of the Socialist opposition to it. In doing so he utilized the notion of a "workers' aristocracy" bought off by the proceeds of colonial looting, at the root of the chauvinist opportunism of the Western Socialist parties. Luxemburg, in her critique of imperialism, points to a contrary effect of war production costs on the ability of the working class to reproduce the conditions of its existence. Loren Goldner, in advancing similar arguments today (in the recent "Fictitious Capital for Beginners: Imperialism, 'Anti-Imperialism' and the continuing relevance of Rosa Luxemburg" to be found at his Break Their Haughty Power website), cites the example of Nazi Germany's prewar build-up, in the course of which living standards were held to 50% of 1929 levels for a number of years.

c General Valeriano Weyler, was a specialist in repression. Formerly Captain-General of the Caroline Archipelago, then Captain-General of the Philippines, Weyler was Captain-General of Catalonia during the 1893 repression before his tour of duty in Cuba, made infamous by an American yellow journalism hungry for a US invasion of Cuba – that would quite differently depict similar, later, practices by the US Army in the Philippines.

d The ripples of anti-imperial contestation would continue to radiate well into the 20th century to reach as close to the imperial centers as Ireland and a far away as Africa and Southeast Asia.

For James Connolly (executed by the British in 1916) of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, the struggle against capitalism lay at the heart of the struggle against English domination: "the whole age-long fight of the Irish people against their oppressors resolves itself, in the final analysis into a fight for the mastery of the means of life, the sources of production, in Ireland." In Africa, libertarian currents can be traced from at least the early 1900s with the founding of the anarchist-influenced Socialist Club by Henry Glass in South Africa and the Revolutionary League in Mozambique by the exiled Portuguese anarchist Jose Estevam. The currents continued later in these areas with the IWW and (Portuguese) CGL-connected syndicalist unions. The emergence of an anti-parliamentary Communist Party in South Africa (the reformist CP formed the next year had the Comintern franchise) is another sign of oppositional developments mirroring those in the imperial centers. Even as anarchism began to lose influence in the Americas, Europe, and elsewhere, the formation of the Eastern Anarchist Federation, comprising members from China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and (Japanese-occupied) Taiwan convened in 1928, demonstrating the continued relevance of the antiauthoritarian perspective against "international capitalistic imperialism."

e As with the anarchist movement internationally, so with the movement in Italy: some of the most outspoken early allies of Mussolini's interventionism were Stirnerite anarchists (whose press magnified the influence of their modest numbers), later joined by other anarchists and syndicalists. The sinister role of Futurism in this reactionary turn should also be noted for those who might yet have any special faith in culture.

f "One is immediately struck with the obstinacy and rigid consistency with which Lenin and his comrades stuck to this slogan ["the right to self-determination of peoples"], a slogan which is in sharp contradiction to their otherwise outspoken centralism in politics as well as to the attitude they have assumed toward other democratic principles. While they showed a quite cool contempt for the Constituent Assembly, universal suffrage, freedom of press and assemblage, in short the whole apparatus of the basic democratic liberties of the people which, taken all together, constituted the right 'to self-determination' inside Russia,

they treated the right to self determination of peoples as a jewel of democratic policy for the sake of which all practical consideration of real criticism had to be stilled.” After pointing out that Lenin’s policies had unexpectedly led to the destruction of previously powerful workers’ movements in these territories peripheral to the Russian Empire, Luxemburg goes on presciently to note that “the phrases concerning self-determination and the entire nationalist movement, which at present constitute the greatest danger for international socialism have experienced an extraordinary strengthening from the Russian Revolution and the Brest negotiations.” Finally, Luxemburg asserts: “From this situation arose the terror and the suppression of democracy.” ‘*The Russian Revolution*,’ written in September 1918. Taken from *The Rosa Luxemburg Reader*, eds. Hudis and Anderson, Monthly Review Press, 2004. (294-299).

g “Waiting for Makhno: legitimacy and context in a Russian peasant war” by Erik C. Landis in *Past and Present*, No. 183, May 2004, (207 n), published by the Oxford University Press for the Past and Present Society. One of the original citations from the Russian – that of the article by P.A. Aptekar in *Rodina*, No. 5, 1994, has the suggestive title “‘Khimchistka” po-tambovski” [Dry-Cleaning, Tambov-Style]. Chemical weapons were used to flush peasant guerrillas from their forest refuges. Tukhachevskii, the “victor of Kronstadt,” anticipates “Chemical Ali.”

h This quotation is taken from Franz Borkenau’s *World Communism*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1962, p. 291

i The classic source for this episode is Harold Isaacs’ *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, Stanford University Press, 1951 [1938]. It is not without limitations, as the fact of its Introduction being written by Leon Trotsky might suggest.

j It is interesting to observe in these ten points not only the principles which some of the participating countries were about to or had already violated (the first point “Respect for fundamental human rights...” for example, was endorsed by Zhou Enlai less than a month before Maoist China would begin its first nationwide campaign against dissident intellectuals, the Hu Feng campaign), but also the repeated admonitions to the participants not to compromise or subvert the territorial integrity or independence of other countries (points two, four, six (b) and seven).

k In addition to the official pronouncements of the Liberation Movements and their sponsors, a parallel literature began to appear in the writings of those such as Caribbean anti-colonialist and later member of the Algerian FLN, Franz Fanon (d. 1961) which had a significant influence in shaping the sensibilities and defining the limits of the Anti-Imperialist current. Fanon’s ideas of consciousness based on racial difference and justifications of violence were to have a baleful influence on would-be revolutionaries such as Malcolm X and Steve Biko, as well as bureaucrats like Che Guevara. In this category too, we must place C.L.R. James (a favorite ideologist of so-called left communists, unable to detach the umbilical cord that connects them to bureaucratic politics, Leninist without a vanguard party), an anti-colonialist whose discreet sympathy for the suppressors of the Kronstadt Commune and apologetics for the Comintern’s colonization of the German KPD in *World Revolution* (1937) led to a later break with Trotskyism. After work for Nkrumah’s Ghana, James came to regard the anti-colonial struggle as the most important inspiration for international revolutionaries.

l *The Economist*, August 23, 2007 in the article “The making of a Neo-KGB State,” highlights the role of the security service (FSB) in developing a “new sort of corporate state,” as well as the enthusiastic support it has received from the Church (“All power is from God and so is theirs” says a prominent Orthodox priest of the FSB).

m The recent commitment of the UK to the construction of an expensive overseas projection capability and the uneven attempts of France, in both internal policy and external diplomacy, to come to terms with the colonial past reminds us that the operational and ideological mechanisms of imperialism are not dormant in the EU. Of the latter, see “Sarkozy and Africa: Big White Chief’s Bad Memory,” by James McDougall in *openDemocracy*, 12/7/07 at: www.opendemocracy.net

n References to practices by Chinese entities overseas reminiscent of the imperialism of the former Great Powers of yesteryear may be found in recent articles including “Cambodia Feels China’s Hard Edge,” which chronicles the concession of an enormous plot of land (twenty times larger than permitted by Cambodia’s 2001 Land Law) to the Chinese Wuzhishan

LS Group for the creation of a pine-tree plantation (among other facilities) on land traditionally granted to the indigenous Phnong tribe, as well as other projects by the same company in other areas of Cambodia that threaten to displace more than 100,000 people. Another recent article, “Chinese Group Wins Rights to Afghan Copper,” relates that the China Metalurgical Group has made the biggest single investment in Afghan history for the development of what could be the world’s largest copper deposit. As a side benefit, the power station which will be built to supply the mine will also supply sufficient power to fill the needs of the nations’ capital city, Kabul.

o It is high time that revolutionaries make proper acknowledgement of the complementary parts played by Marxism-Leninism and Fascism, as two wings of the same *general movement of reaction* against the rising proletarian, peasant, and intellectual insurgency of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The earliest conscious expressions of these twin tendencies, those of Lenin on the one hand and of Mussolini on the other, grew from the same source: (Marxian) social-democracy. The use of conspiratorial, quasi-military organization, of “fronts” and the infiltration of strategic organizations as a means to establishing influence, and the notion of themselves as the “general staff” of some kind of alleged revolution embodied in their own seizure of state power, unite these post-social-democratic factions. So does their presumption that the working class itself, incapable of more than a “trade-union consciousness” in Lenin’s infamous words, or unwilling to embark on crusades of national greatness (eg campaigns of forced capital accumulation, war), needs the Party, composed of this or that constellation of petit-bourgeois elements, at its head to lead it. To think that such tendencies, then or now, can be the allies of antiauthoritarian, anti-capitalist revolutionaries, is to ignore not just the overwhelming weight of the historical experience of the world’s proletarian revolutions, but the very material nature of the political economies and quality of life in the regimes created by these hyper-authoritarian Symbionese twins.

p This situation is explored in its relation to the recent campaign of the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party, through its front The World Can’t Wait at: theworldcantwake.org

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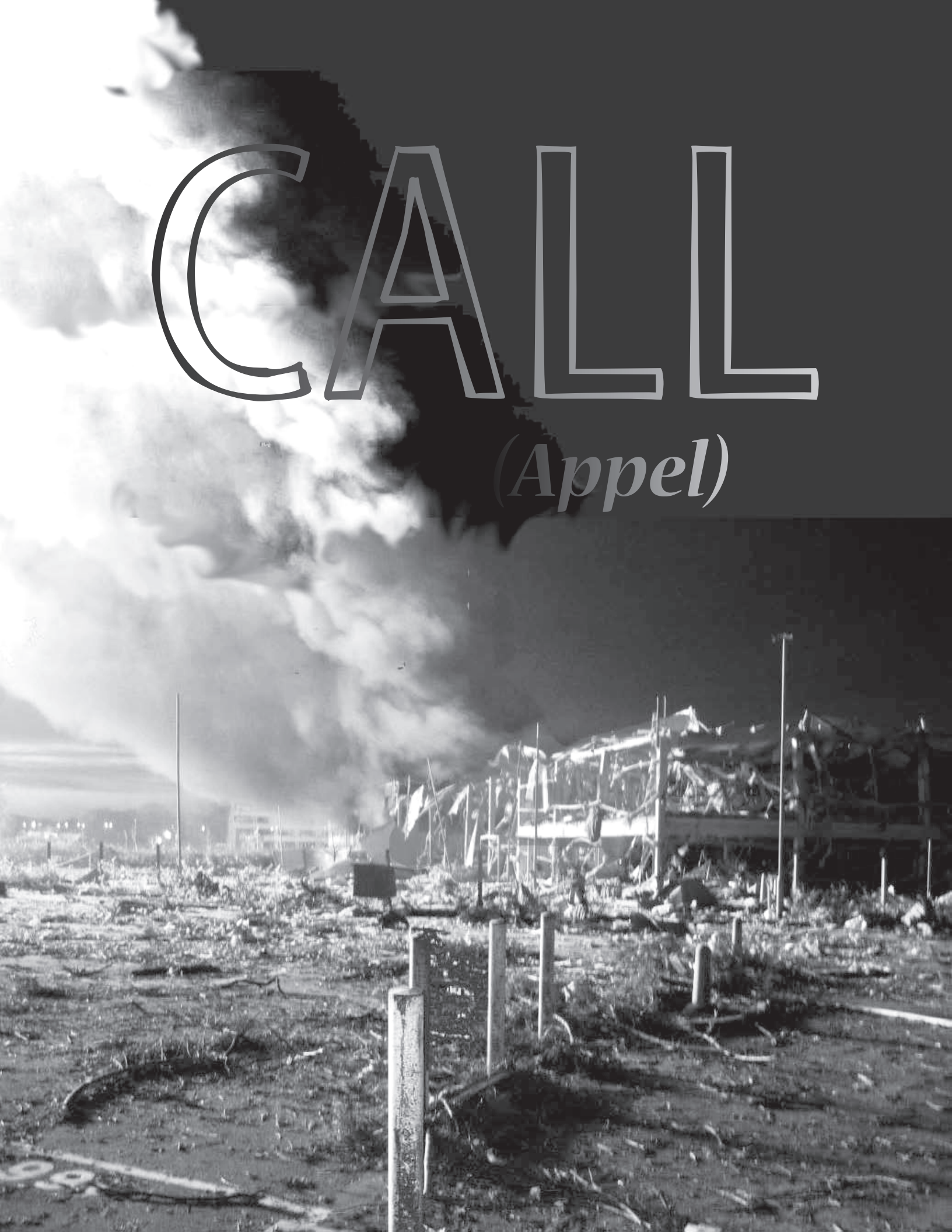
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CALL

(Appel)



Part One (propositions 1-4)

Translated for US-English by Lawrence Jarach (in communication with the authors)

Proposition I

Nothing is missing from the triumph of civilization. Neither political terror nor emotional poverty. Nor universal sterility.

The desert can no longer expand: it is everywhere. But it can still deepen.

Faced with the obviousness of the catastrophe, there are those who become indignant and those who take note, those who denounce and those who get organized. We are on the side of those who get organized.

Scholium

This is a call. That is to say it aims at those who can hear it. The question is not to demonstrate, to argue, to *convince*. We will go directly to the obvious. This is not primarily a matter of logic or reasoning. What is obvious is what is perceptible, the realm of reality.

There is a clarity to every reality. What is held in common or what sets apart. After this is recognized, communication becomes possible again; communication which is no longer presupposed, but which is to be built.

And this network of obvious things that make us up... we have been taught so well to doubt it, to avoid it, to conceal it, to keep it to ourselves. We have been taught so well that we lack the words when we want to shout.

As for the order we live under, everyone knows what it consists of: the empire is staring us in the

face. That a dying social system has no other justification to its arbitrary nature than its absurd determination—its senile determination—simply to *linger on*; that the global and national police have received a free hand to get rid of those who do not toe the line; that civilization, wounded in its heart, no longer encounters anything but its own limits in the endless war it has begun; that this headlong flight, already almost a century old, produces nothing but a series of increasingly frequent disasters; that the mass of humans accommodate themselves to this order of things by means of lies, cynicism, brutalization, or pills—no one can claim to ignore these things any longer.

And the sport that consists in endlessly describing the present disaster, with a varying degree of complaisance, is just another way of saying: “that’s the way it is;” the prize of infamy going to journalists, to all those who pretend every morning to rediscover the bullshit they only just noticed the day before.

But what is most striking, for the time being, is not the arrogance of empire, but rather the weakness of the counter-attack. Like a colossal paralysis. A mass paralysis, which will sometimes cause people to say that nothing can be done, but who will sometimes concede, when pushed to their limit, that “there is so much to do”—which isn’t any different. Then, at the margins of this paralysis, there is the “we really have to do something, anything” of the activists.

Seattle, Prague, Genoa, the struggle against GMOs, the movement of the unemployed; we have played our part, we have *taken sides* in the

struggles of recent years; and of course not that of the extraparlimentary (for now) coalition of Leftists from ATTAC or the Negrist antiglobalization militants of *Tute Bianche*.

The folklore of protests has ceased to amuse us. In the last decade, we have seen the dull monologue of Marxism-Leninism being regurgitated from the mouths of teenagers. We have seen the purest anarchism negate what it cannot comprehend. We have seen the most tedious economism—that of *the friends of Le Monde Diplomatique*—becoming the new popular religion. And Negrism asserts itself as the only alternative to the intellectual rout of the global left.

Everywhere militantism has gone back to raising its rickety constructions, its depressing networks, until it is exhausted.

It took no more than three years for the cops, unions, and other informal bureaucracies to dismantle the short-lived Anti-Globalization Movement. To control it. To divide it into separate “areas of struggle,” each as profitable as it is sterile. In these times, from Davos to Porto Alegre, from the French bosses’ union Medef to the French CNT, capitalism and anti-capitalism point to the same missing horizon. The same truncated prospect of *managing the disaster*.

What opposes this dominant desolation is nothing but another desolation, just less well-stocked. Everywhere there is



the same idiotic idea of happiness. The same games of spastic power. The same defused superficiality. The same emotional illiteracy. The same desert.

We say that this epoch is a desert, and that this desert is incessantly deepening. This is no poetic device; it is obvious. This obviousness holds many others. Notably the rupture with all who protest, all who denounce, and all who ramble on about the disaster.

She who denounces exempts herself.

Everything appears as if Leftists were accumulating reasons to revolt the same way a manager accumulates the means to dominate. That is to say *with the same delight*.

The desert is the progressive depopulation of various worlds. The habit we have adopted of living as if we were not of this world. The desert exists in the continuous, massive, and programmed proletarianization of populations, just as in California suburbs, where distress lies precisely in the fact that no one *seems* to experience it.

That the present desert is not perceived only verifies its existence.

Some have tried to name the desert. To point out what has to be fought—not as the action of some foreign agent, but as an ensemble of relations. They have talked about the Spectacle, about Biopower, about Empire. But this only adds to the current confusion.

The spectacle is not an easy ab-

breviation for mass media. It lives just as much in the cruelty with which our own *false image* is endlessly thrown back at us.

Biopower is not a synonym for social security, the welfare state, or the pharmaceutical industry; but it pleasantly lodges itself in the care that we take of our pretty bodies, in a certain *physical* estrangement from oneself as well as from others.

Empire is not some kind of extraterrestrial entity, a worldwide conspiracy of governments, financial networks, technocrats, and multinational corporations. Empire is everywhere *nothing is happening*. Everywhere things are working. Everywhere the status quo reigns.

We continue to see the enemy as a subject that faces us—instead of experiencing it as a relationship that binds us—we confine ourselves to the struggle against confinement. We reproduce the worst relationships of dominance under the pretext of an alternative. We set up shops for selling the struggle against the commodity. We see the rise of the authorities of the anti-authoritarian struggle, macho feminism, and anti-racist lynchings.

At every moment we are taking part in a situation. Within a situation there are no subjects and objects, I and the other, my desires and reality—only an ensemble of relationships, an ensemble of the fluxes that traverse it.

There is a general context—capitalism, civilization, empire, as you

wish—a general context that not only intends to control each situation but, even worse, seeks a way to make sure as often as possible, that there is *no situation*. They have planned out streets and homes, language and emotions, even the global tempo that drives all of it, *only for that purpose*. Everywhere different realms are made to slide by each other and be ignored. The *normal situation* is this absence of a situation.

To get organized means: to understand the situation and not merely challenge it. To take sides within it. Weaving the necessary material, emotional, and political solidarities. This is what any strike does in any office, in any factory. This is what any gang does. Any underground; any revolutionary or counter-revolutionary party. To get organized means: to give substance to the situation. Making it real, tangible.

Reality is not capitalist.

Our position within a situation determines our need to become allies, and for that reason to establish some lines of communication, some wider current or tendency. In turn those new links reconfigure the situation. We call the situation that we are in Global Civil War. Where there is no longer anything that can limit the confrontation between the opposing forces. Not even the law, which comes into play as one more form of the generalized confrontation.

The We that speaks here is not a definable, isolated We, the We of a group. It is the We of a *position*. This position is asserted currently as a double secession: first a secession from the process of capitalist valorization, then secession from all the sterility imposed by a mere *opposition* to empire (extra-parliamentary or otherwise); a secession therefore from the Left. Here *secession* means

less a practical refusal to communicate than a disposition to forms of communication so intense that, when put into practice, they snatch from the enemy most of its power. To put it briefly, such a position borrows sudden force from the Black Panthers, collective dining halls from the German *Autonomen*, tree houses and the art of sabotage from the British neo-Luddites, the careful choice of words from radical feminists, mass self-reductions from the Italian autonomists, and armed joy from the June 2nd Movement.

From now on, all friendship is political.

Proposition II

The unlimited escalation of control is a hopeless response to the predictable breakdowns of the system. Nothing that is expressed in the known distribution of political identities is able to lead beyond the disaster.

Therefore, we begin by withdrawing from them. We contest nothing, we demand nothing. We constitute ourselves as a force, as a material force, as an autonomous material force within the Global Civil War.

This call sets out its conditions.

Scholium

Here a new weapon of crowd dispersal, a kind of wooden fragmentation grenade is being tested. There it is proposed that demonstrators blocking traffic receive twenty-five year sentences. The Israeli army is becoming the most prominent consultant in urban pacification; experts from all over the world rush to marvel at the latest discoveries, both formidable and subtle, in methods to eliminate subversives. It would appear that the art of wounding – injuring one to frighten a hundred – has reached new heights. And then, of course, there's Terrorism. That is, "any of-

fence committed intentionally by an individual or a group against one or more countries, their institutions or their populations, and aiming at threatening and/or seriously undermining or destroying the political, economic, or social structures of a country." That's the definition of the European Commission. In the United States there are more prisoners than farmers.

As it is reorganized and progressively recaptured, public space is blanketed with cameras. It is not only that surveillance is now possible, it is that it has become particularly acceptable. All sorts of lists of suspects circulate from department to department, and we can barely make out their probable uses. Protected by the police, gangs of paramilitaries replace the positions once held by gossips and snitches, figures of another era. A former head of the CIA, one of those people who, *on the opposing side*, get organized rather than get indignant, writes in *Le Monde*: "More than a war against terrorism, what is at stake is the extension of democracy to the parts of the [Arab and Muslim] world that threaten liberal civilization, the construction and the defense of which we have worked for throughout the 20th century, during the First, and then the Second World War, followed by the Cold War – or the Third World War."

Nothing shocks us about this; nothing catches us unawares or radically alters our feeling toward life. We were born *inside* the catastrophe and we have established a strange and comfortable relation of habit with it. Almost an intimacy. For as long as we can remember there has been no news besides that of the Global Civil War. We have been raised as survivors, as *machines of survival*. We have been raised with the idea that life consists in continually going on; walking in indifference until crushed among other bodies who walk identically, who



stumble and get crushed in turn. In the end, the only novelty of the present epoch is that none of this can be hidden anymore, that in a sense *everybody knows it*. Hence the most recent visible hardening of the system: its motives are exposed, it would be pointless to wish them away.

Many wonder why no part of the Left or far-Left, no known political force, is capable of opposing this course of events. "We still live in a democracy, right?" They can wonder for a long time: nothing that is expressed within the framework of traditional politics will ever be able to limit the advance of the desert, because traditional politics is *part of the desert*.

When we say this it's not in order to advocate extra-parliamentary politics as an antidote to liberal democracy. The popular manifesto "We are the Left," signed a couple of years ago by all the social justice collectives and social movements to be found in France, expresses well enough the logic that, for thirty years, has driven extra-parliamentary politics: we do not want to seize power, overthrow the state, etc.; really we want to be recognized as valid representatives.

Wherever the classical conception of politics prevails, the same impotence prevails opposite the disaster. That this impotence is widely distributed between a variety of eventually *reconcilable* identities changes nothing about it. The anarchist

from the Fédération Anarchiste, the council communist, the Trotskyist from ATTAC and the lawmaker start from the same amputation; they spread the same desert.

Politics, for them, is what is settled, said, done, and decided between men. The assembly that gathers them all, that gathers all human beings in *abstraction from their respective worlds*, forms the ideal political situation. The economy, the economic sphere,

It is now considered natural for everyone to have a rapport with the world based on the idea that each person has her own life. That such a life consists in a series of choices, good or bad. That the contract adequately epitomizes relations between individuals, and that respect epitomizes all virtue. That language is nothing but a means of arriving at an agreement...

follows logically: it is both a necessary and impossible *management* of all that was left outside the assembly, of all that was determined to be *non-political* and which then *becomes* family, busi-

ness, private life, leisure, pastimes, culture, etc.

That is how the classical definition of politics spreads the desert: by abstracting humans from their world, by disconnecting them from the network of things, habits, words, fetishes, emotions, places, solidarities that make up their worlds, their perceptual worlds, and that gives them their specific substance.

Classical politics is the glorious staging of bodies in exile. But the assembly of political individualities poorly masks the desert that it is. There is no human society separated from

the sum of human and non-human beings. There is a plurality of realms. Of realms that are all the more real because they are shared. And that coexist.

The political world, in truth, is the interplay between different realms, the alliance between those that are compatible and the confrontation between those that are irreconcilable.

Therefore we say that the central political fact of the last thirty years went unnoticed. Because it took place at such a deep level of reality that it cannot be called *political* without bringing about a revolution in the very notion of the political. Because this level of reality is also the one where the division is elaborated between what is taken for reality and what is not. This central fact is the triumph of Existential Liberalism. The fact that it is now considered natural for everyone to have a rapport with the world based on the idea that each person has her *own life*. That such a life consists in a series of *choices*, good or bad. That each person can define herself by an ensemble of qualities, of *properties*, that make her, through her continual balancing of those properties, a unique and irreplaceable being. That the *contract* adequately epitomizes relations between individuals, and that *respect* epitomizes all virtue. That language is nothing but a *means* of arriving at an agreement. That, in reality, the world is composed on one side of things to manage, and on the other of an ocean of self-absorbed individuals, who in turn have a regrettable tendency to turn themselves into things, letting themselves become managed.

Of course, cynicism is only one of the possible features of the

infinite clinical diagnoses of Existential Liberalism. It also includes depression, apathy, immunodeficiency – every immune system is intrinsically collective – dishonesty, judicial harassment, chronic dissatisfaction, denied affection, isolation, illusions of citizenship, and the loss of all generosity.

Existential liberalism has propagated its desert so well that even the most sincere Leftists express their utopia with its very terms. “We will rebuild an egalitarian society in which each person makes her contribution and from which each person gets her needs met from it... As far as individual desires are concerned, it could be egalitarian if each person consumes in proportion to the efforts she is ready to contribute. Naturally it will be necessary to redefine the method of evaluating the efforts contributed by each person,” write the organizers of the Alternative, Anti-capitalist, and Anti-war Village against the G8 summit in Evian in a text entitled *When Capitalism and Wage Labor Will Have Been Abolished!* Here is a key to the triumph of Empire: managing to keep in the shadows, to surround with silence *the very terrain* on which it maneuvers, the field upon which it fights the decisive battle: that of manipulating feelings, of defining the limits of the perceptible. In such a way it preventively paralyzes any defense at the very moment of its operation, and ruins the very *idea* of a counter-offensive. The victory is won whenever the militant, at the end of a hard day of Political Work, slumps down in front of an action movie.

When they see us withdraw from the painful rituals of classical politics – the general assembly, the meeting, the negotiation, the protest, the demand – when they hear us speak about the perceptible realm rather than about work, IDs, pensions, or freedom of movement, militants give us a pitying look. “Poor guys,” they seem to say, “they are resigning themselves to minority politics, they have retreated into their ghetto, and renounced any widening of the struggle. They will never be part of a movement.” But we believe exactly the opposite: it is they who resign themselves to minority politics by speaking their language of false objectivity, whose gravity consists of nothing more than repetition and rhetoric. Nobody is fooled by the veiled contempt with which they talk about the worries of The People, and which allows them to go from the unemployed person to the illegal



immigrant, from the striker to the prostitute *without ever putting themselves at risk* – their contempt is that obvious. Their will to *widen the struggle* is nothing but a way to flee from *those who are already there*, and, above all, from those they would dread living with. And finally, it is they who are loath to admit the political meaning of sensitivity, who have to rely on *sentimentality* as their pitiful driving force. All in all, we prefer to start from small and dense nuclei than from a vast and loose network. We are familiar enough with that spinelessness.

Proposition III

Those who would respond to the urgency of the situation with the urgency of their reaction only add to the suffocation.

Their manner of intervention, of agitation, points to the rest of their politics.

As for us, the urgency of the situation liberates us from all considerations of legality or legitimacy, which have, in any case, become uninhabitable.

That it might take a generation to build a victorious revolutionary movement in all its breadth does not frighten us. We think about this with serenity. Just as we serenely recognize the criminal nature of our existence, and of our deeds.

Scholium

We have known, and are still familiar with, the temptation of activism.

The counter-summits, the campaigns against evictions, against new security laws and the building of new prisons, the occupations, the No-Border camps; the parade of all of this. The progressive dispersion of collectives responding to the same dispersion of activity. Running after the movements.

Feeling our power on an ad hoc basis, but at the price of returning each time to an underlying powerlessness. Paying a high price for each campaign. Letting it consume all the energy that we have. Then moving to the next one, each time more out of breath, more exhausted, more saddened.

And little by little, through demanding, through denouncing, we become incapable of sensing what is supposed to be the basis of our engagement, the nature of the urgency that flows through us.

Activism is the first reflex. The *standard* response to the urgency of the present situation. The perpetual mobilization in the name of urgency is what our governments and our bosses have made us used to, even when we fight against them.

Forms of life disappear every day; plant and animal species, human experiences and countless relationships between living beings and ways of living. But our feeling of urgency is tied less to the speed of these extinctions than to their irreversibility, and even more to our inability to repopulate the desert.

The activist mobilizes herself against the catastrophe. But only to prolong it. Her haste consumes what little of the world remains. The activist answer to

urgency remains faithful to the regime of urgency, with no hope of getting out of it or interrupting it.

The activist wants to be everywhere. She goes everywhere that the rhythm of the breakdown of the machine leads her. Everywhere she brings her pragmatic inventiveness, the festive energy of her opposition to the catastrophe. Without a doubt, the activist gets shit done. But she never devotes herself to thinking about how it is to be done. How to hinder concretely the progress of the desert, in order to establish inhabitable worlds without waiting.

We desert activism. Without forgetting what gives it strength: a certain presence within the situation. An ease of movement within it. A way to apprehend the struggle; not from a moral or ideological angle, but technically and tactically.

Old militantism provides the opposite example. There is something amazing about the cluelessness of militants in various situations. We remember this scene from Genoa: about 50 militants of the Trotskyist *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* wave their red flags labeled "100% on the Left." They are motionless, timeless. They shout their pre-approved slogans, surrounded by peace-

police. Meanwhile, a few meters away, some of us fight the lines of *carabinieri*, throwing back tear-gas canisters, ripping up paving

stones to make projectiles, preparing Molotov cocktails with bottles found in the trash and gasoline from overturned Vespas. When compelled to comment on us the militants speak of adventurism, mindlessness. Their

pretext is that the conditions are not right. We say that nothing was lacking, that everything was there—except them.

What we desert in militantism is this absence from the situation. Just as we desert the inconsistency to which activism condemns them.

Activists themselves feel this inconsistency. And this is why, periodically, they turn toward their elders, the militants. They borrow their strategies, terrains of struggle, slogans. What appeals to them in militantism is the consistency, the structure, the loyalty they lack. And so the activists revert to old-new disputes and demand—"citizenship for all," "free movement of people," "guaranteed income," "free public transport."

The problem with demands is that, by formulating needs in terms that make them audible to power, they say *nothing* about those needs, and what real transformations of the world they require. Thus, demanding free public transportation says nothing of our need to travel rather than be transported,

The problem with demands is that, by formulating needs in terms that make them audible to power, they say nothing about those needs, and what real transformations of the world they require. Thus, demanding free public transportation says nothing of our need to travel rather than be transported, of our need for slowness.

of our need for slowness. In addition, demands often end up masking the real conflicts. Demanding free public transportation only slows the spread of fare-dodging techniques, at least for this specific milieu. Calling for the free movement of people merely means avoiding the issue of a practical escape from a tightening of control. Fighting for a guaranteed income is, at best, to condemn ourselves to the illusion that an amelioration of the worst of capitalism is necessary to get out of it. Whatever form it takes, the impasse is always the same: the subjective resources mobilized may be revolutionary, yet they remain imbedded in a program of (radical) reformism. Under the pretext of overcoming the alternative between reform and revolution we sink into a timely ambiguity.

The present catastrophe is that of a world actively made uninhabitable. A sort of methodical devastation of everything that remained livable in the relations of humans with each other and with our environments. Capitalism could not have triumphed over the whole planet if it was not for techniques of power, specifically political techniques—there are all kinds of techniques: with or without tools, corporal or discursive, erotic or culinary, the disciplines and mechanisms of control, and it is pointless to denounce the *reign of technics*. The political techniques of capitalism consist first of all in breaking the attachments through which a group finds the means to produce, in the same movement, the conditions of its subsistence and its existence. In separating human communities from innumerable things—stones and metals, plants, trees that have a thousand purposes, gods, djinns, wild or tamed animals, medicines and psycho-active substances, am-

ulets, machines, and all the other beings in their realms that co-exist with humans.

Ruining all community, separating groups from their means of existence and from the knowledge linked to them: it is political rationality that dictates the imposition of the commodity as the mediator of every relation. Just as it was necessary to liquidate the witches—which is to say their medicinal knowledge as well as the movement between the visible and invisible worlds which they promoted—today peasants have to renounce their ability to sow their own seeds in order to maintain the grip of multinational agribusinesses and other organizations of agricultural politics.

These political techniques of capitalism find their maximal point of concentration in contemporary metropolises. Metropolises are precisely the arena where, in the end, there is almost nothing left to reappropriate. A milieu in which everything is done so the human only relates to itself, only creates itself separately from other forms of life, bumps into or uses them without ever meeting them.

On the basis of this separation, and to make it durable, even the most minor, tentative, attempt at living outside commodity relationships has been made criminal. The field of legality has long been conflated with the multiple constraints that make life impossible—through wage labor or self-employment, charity work or militancy.

At the same time as this field becomes increasingly uninhabitable, everything that can contribute to making real life possible has been transformed into a crime.

Where activists claim that “No One is Illegal” we must recognize exactly the opposite: today an entirely legal ex-



istence would be an entirely submissive existence.

We have tax evasion, fictitious employment, insider trading, fake bankruptcies, welfare fraud, embezzlement, forgeries, and various other scams. There are trips across borders in airplane luggage compartments, trips without a ticket inside one city or within a country. Fare-dodging and shoplifting are the daily practices of thousands of people in the metropolises. And there is the illegal practice of trading seeds that has safeguarded many plant species. There are even more functional illegalities in the capitalist world-system. Some are tolerated, others encouraged, and others still that are eventually punished. An improvised vegetable garden on a wasteland has every chance of being flattened by a bulldozer even before its first harvest.

If we add up the sum of the special laws and customary regulations that govern all of the spaces that anyone can travel through in one day, there is not a single life that can be assured of impunity. Laws, codes, and juridical decisions exist that make every existence punishable; it would merely be a matter of applying them to the letter.

We are not ready to bet that where the desert grows there also grows something that can save us. Nothing can succeed that does not begin through a break with everything that makes *this* desert grow.

We know that building a power of any scale will take time. There are many things that we no longer know how to do. In fact, those of us who benefit from the modernization and the education dispensed in our developed lands barely know how to make

anything ourselves. Even gathering plants for cooking or medicine—rather than merely for decoration—is regarded as archaic at best, at worst as a nice hobby.

We make a simple observation: everyone has access to a certain quantity of resources and knowledge made available by the simple fact of living in these lands of the old world, and we can communize them.

The question is not whether to live with or without money, to steal or to buy, to work or not, but how to use the money we have to increase our autonomy from the commodity sphere. And if we prefer to steal instead of working, or produce for ourselves instead of stealing, it is not due to a concern with purity. It is because the flows of power that accompany the flows of commodities, the subjective submission that conditions our access to survival, have become too expensive.

There would be many inappropriate ways to express what we envision: we neither want to leave for the countryside nor reappropriate and accumulate ancient knowledge. We are not merely concerned with a reappropriation of methods. Nor with a reappropriation of knowledge. If we put together all that knowledge, those techniques, and all the inventiveness displayed in the field of activism, we would still not get a revolutionary movement. It is a question of temporality. A question of creating the conditions where an offensive can sustain itself without fading away, of establishing the material solidarities that allow us to *maintain* it.



We believe there is no revolution without the constitution of a common material force. We do not ignore the anachronism of this belief. We know it is both too early and too late, which is why we have time. We have stopped waiting.

Proposition IV

We set the point of reversal, the way out of the desert, the end of Capital, in the intensity of the link that each person manages to establish between what she thinks and how she lives. Contrary to the upholders of Existential Liberalism, we refuse to view this as a private matter, an individual issue, a question of character. On the contrary, we start from the certainty that this link depends on the construction of shared realms, of placing effective means in common.

Scholium

Every day each person is enjoined to accept that it is naive, out of date, a pure and simple absence of culture to ask about the *link between life and thought*. We consider this a symptom. This is nothing but an effect of the Liberal redefinition, so fundamentally modern, of the distinction between the public and the private. Liberalism has put forward the principle that everything must be tolerated, that everything can be thought, *so long as* it is recognized as being without direct consequences to the current structure of society, of its institutions, and of the power of the State. Any idea can be accepted; its expression should even be supported, *so long as* social and state rules are accepted. In other words, the freedom of thought of the private individual must be total, as must be her freedom of expression, in principle; but she must not *desire* the *consequences* of her thought as far as it concerns collective life.

Liberalism may have invented the individual, but it invented her mutilated from the get-go. The Liberal individual, who has never expressed herself better than in the pacifist and civil rights movements of today, is supposed to be attached to her freedom insofar as her



freedom does not commit her to anything, and certainly does not try to impose itself upon others. The stupid precept “my freedom ends where that of another begins” is received today as an unassailable truth. Even John Stuart Mill, though one of the essential facilitators of the Liberal conquest, noticed that an unfortunate consequence follows: one is permitted to desire anything, on the sole condition *that it is not desired too intensely*, that it does not go beyond the limits of the private, or in any case beyond those of *public free expression*.

What we call Existential Liberalism is the adherence to a series of facts and ideas, which at their core, show an essential propensity toward betrayal. We have become accustomed to functioning at a sort of low gear in which we are relieved of the very idea of betrayal. This emotional lower gear is the guarantee we have accepted for our becoming-adult. Along with, for the most zealous, the mirage of an emotional self-containment as an unassailable ideal. Nevertheless, there is too much to betray for those who decide to keep those promises, no doubt carried since childhood, and which they continue to believe.

Among Liberal tenets is behaving like an owner, even towards your own experiences.

This is why not behaving like a Liberal individual means primarily not valuing properties. Or really another meaning should be given to “properties”: not what belongs to me in particular, but what *connects* me to the world, and what is therefore not reserved for me, has nothing to do with private property, nor with what is supposed to define an identity (the “that’s just the way I am,” and its confirmation “that’s just like you!”). While we reject the idea of individual property, we have nothing against commitments. The question of appropriation or re-appropriation comes down to the question of knowing what is *appropriate* for us, that is to say adequate, in terms of use, in terms of need, in terms of relation to a place, to a moment in a world.

Existential Liberalism is the spontaneous ethics suitable for Social Democracy seen as a political ideal. You will never be a better citizen than when you are capable of renouncing a relation or a struggle in order to maintain your status. It will not always be without suffering, but that is precisely where Existential Liberalism is efficient: it even provides the remedies to the discomforts that it generates. The check to Amnesty International, the fair trade coffee, the demo against the last war, seeing the latest Michael Moore film, are so many non-acts disguised as gestures that will save you. Carry on exactly as usual; that is to say go for a walk in the designated spaces and do your shopping, the same as always. But on top of that, *in addition*, ease your conscience; buy No

We know it is both too early and too late, which is why we have time. We have stopped waiting.

Logo, boycott Shell. This should be enough to convince you that political action, at bottom, does not require very much, and that you too are capable of *engaging* in it. There is nothing new in this buying and selling of indulgences, but the problem becomes palpable in the prevailing confusion.

The invocatory culture of Another World Is Possible leaves little room to speak of ethics beyond consumer etiquette. The increase in the number of environmentalist, humanitarian, and solidarity associations opportunely channels general discontent and thus contributes to the perpetuation of this state of affairs, through personal valorization, official recognition and its first prize of honestly awarded subsidies; the worship, in short, of social usefulness. Above all, no more enemies. At the very most, problems, abuses seen as catastrophes—dangers from which only the mechanisms of power can protect us.

If the obsession of the founders of Liberalism was the neutralization of sects, it is because they united all the subjective elements that had to be banished in order for the modern State to exist. For a sectarian, life is exactly what is required for its particular philosophical truth and how it gets explained—a certain *disposition* toward worldly things and events, a way of not losing sight of what matters. There is an obvious overlap between the appearance of Society (and of its correlate: Economy) and the Liberal redefinition of the public and the private. The sectarian collectivity is, in itself, a threat to what is re-

ferred to by the pleonasm Liberal Society. This is due to it being a form of divisive organization. Here lies the nightmare for the founders of the modern State: a section of collectivity detaches itself from the whole, thus ruining the idea of social unity. Two things that Society can’t handle: 1) that a thought may be embodied, which is to say that it may have an effect on a person’s existence in terms of how she manages her life, or the manner in which she lives, and 2) that this embodiment may be not merely passed on to others, but also shared, *communized*. Any collective experience beyond control will be banally discredited as a so-called sect.

The pervasiveness of the commodity has inserted itself everywhere. This pervasiveness is the most effective instrument for disconnecting *ends* from *means*, to reduce everyday life to a living-space we are only required to *manage*. Everyday life is what we are supposed to want to return to; the acceptance of a necessary and universal neutralization. It is the ever-growing renunciation of the possibility of an unpostponed joy. As a friend once said, it is the average of all our possible crimes.

Rare are the collectivities that can escape the abyss that waits for them: mashing of the real into an extreme flatness, community as the epitome of average intensity, a slow disintegration clumsily filled with a bunch of banal and falsely sophisticated banter.

Neutralization is an essential characteristic of Liberal Society. Everybody knows the centers of neutralization, where it is required that no emotion stands

out, where each person has to *contain* herself, and everybody experiences them as such: businesses (and what isn't a business these days?), night clubs, bowling alleys and golf courses, museums, etc. Since everyone knows what these places are about, the real question is to know why—despite that—they can still be so popular. Why wish for, always and above all, that nothing happens that might provoke stirrings that go too deep? Out of habit? Because of despair? Because of cynicism? Or else: because you can feel the delight of being somewhere while not being there, of being there while being *essentially* somewhere else; because what we are at base would be preserved to the point of no longer even having to exist.

These are ethical questions that must of course be asked and above all, they are those that we find at the very heart of the political: how to respond to emotional neutralization and to the potential effects of decisive thoughts? And also: how do modern societies work with these neutralizations, or rather, how are they made into essential cogs in its continual functioning? How does the material effectiveness of the empire relate to our predisposition toward giving up, regardless of our collective experiences?

The acceptance of these neutralizations can of course go hand in hand with great creative efforts. You can experiment up to the point of madness, on condition that you are a single creator, and that you produce the proof of this singularity in public (your works). You can still know what the stirrings are, but only on condition that you experience them alone, and that you are limited to passing them on indirectly. You will thereby be recognized as an artist or as a thinker, and, perhaps if you are *politically engaged*, you will be able to toss as many bottles into the ocean as you like, with the clear conscience of one who sees farther and who has warned others.

Like many, we have experienced that emotions stuck *internally* turn out badly: they can even turn into *symptoms*. The rigidities we observe in ourselves come from the partitions that every person believes herself obliged to put up in order to define her own limits, and to contain within her self what must not burst forth. When, for some reason or other, these partitions happen to crack and break, then things come up that might be unpleasant, which may even

appear frightful—but it is a fright capable of freeing us from fear. Calling into question both our individual limits and the borders drawn by civilization can be a life-saver. The existence of any real community necessitates a certain physical danger: when emotions and thoughts are no longer ascribable to any one person, when interactions are recovered in which feelings, ideas, impressions, and emotions are exchanged carelessly. It must be understood that community *per se* is not the solution: it is its disappearance, everywhere and always, *that is the problem*.

We do not perceive humans to be isolated from each other or from the other beings of this world; we see them bound by multiple connections that we have learned to deny. This denial allows the blocking of emotional exchanges through which these multiple connections are experienced. This blockage, in turn, is necessary to make us accustomed to the most neutral, the most lifeless, the most average feelings; that which makes us long for vacations, lunch-breaks, or evenings out as a godsend—that is to say something just as neutral, average, and lifeless—but freely chosen. The imperial order, which is particularly Westernized, is nourished through this boredom.

We will be told: by advocating the experience of sharing intense emotions, you go against what living beings require to live, namely gentleness and calm—quite expensive these days, like any scarce commodity. If what is meant by this is that our point of view is incompatible with authorized leisure, then even winter sports junkies might admit that it would be no great loss to see all ski resorts burn and to return that environment to the marmots. On the other hand, we have nothing against the gentleness that any living being, as a living being, carries within itself. “It might be that living is a gentle thing.” Any blade of grass knows this better than all the citizens of the world.

“It might be that living is a gentle thing.” Any blade of grass knows this better than all the citizens of the world.

Anarchist Media Review

Reviews this issue are by Aragorn! [A!], Clayton James [CJ]

Dot Matrix [DM], and Lawrence Jarach [LJ].

Anarchy does exchanges with all other anarchist and anti-state, anti-capitalist periodicals.

We try to review all such periodicals received.

A Steampunk's Guide to the Apocalypse

www.tangledwilderness.com
60 pages, \$5

From the makers of Steampunk magazine comes a "best of" collection of their first few issues that surpasses the magazine itself in terms of being simple and practical, with do-it-yourself instructions on how to live in the coming world without "the dark Oils of subterranean Caverns." This is a fantastic introduction to dealing with housing, clean water, gardening, disease, and defense with an aesthetic that is one-part-steampunk and one-part-crust-punk. This *Guide to the Apocalypse* contains accurate sketches, artwork straight out of Tom of Finland-meets-Neil Gaiman, and stylized writing without being overly jargony. If every anti-authoritarian project were this creative and dedicated, the milieu would be a far more dynamic and interesting place to be. (A!)

Anna's Story

c/o Purple Thistle Center
975 Vernon East Vancouver BC Canada
20 pages, \$9

This is a short children's story of standing up for a community garden. The expense is due to the hand-binding and DIY stencil cover. The content is an elementary community defense story with simple line drawings depicting Anna, who just wants a ripe tomato. (A!)

Black Flag

#226 (2007)
BM Hurricane
London WC1N 3XX
40 pages, £3

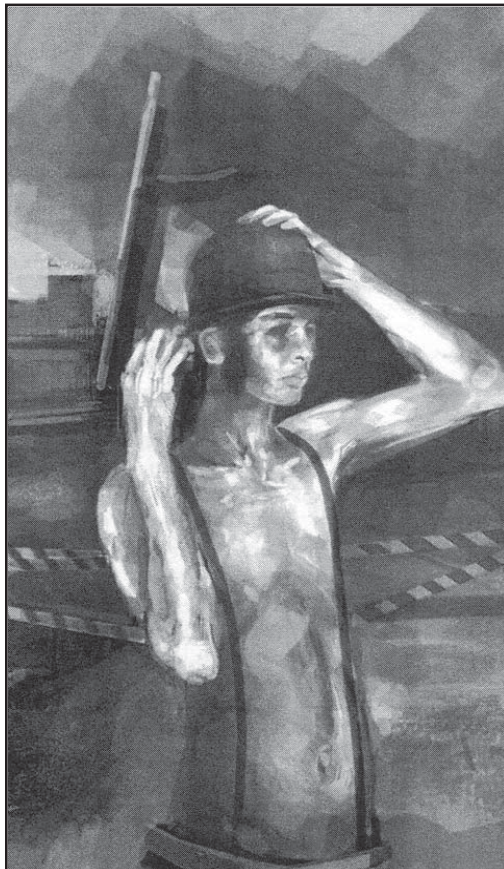
Like the Terminator, this periodical refuses to give up, even after it would have been declared dead innumerable times. Since the take-over of *Black Flag's* erstwhile bitter rival *Freedom* by dreary anarchists like Iain McKay, there was no discernable need (at least from this side of the pond) for yet another periodical featuring him or his tendency. But here we are, after a decade or so of false demises, witnessing the reappearance of a new *Black Flag*, complete with different format (think *Northeast Anarchist*), but with even more stodgy multiple contributions by McKay and his doppelganger Andrew Flood. It seems that the typical six to eight pages of *Freedom* just weren't enough to contain their combined output; with this relaunch, they have allotted to

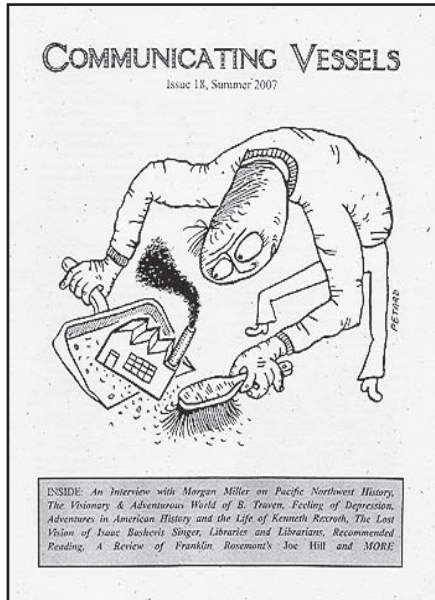
themselves a full third (ten out of thirty pages) of the content. Eight pages are taken up by reprints of two dead guys (Bookchin and Brinton—the latter who never declared himself an anarchist and the former who ditched his self-professed allegiance by the time he wrote what the editors decided to reprint), while almost every remaining page is taken up by other *Freedom* stalwarts. Perhaps the nicest thing that can be said for this highly pixilated, badly colored magazine is that they did the Brinton reprint. [LJ]

Communicating Vessels

#18, Summer 2007
3527 NE 15th Ave. #127
Portland, OR 97211
52 pages, \$3

I've always appreciated *Communicating Vessels*. There is a scarcity of writing about literature from an anarchistic viewpoint, and most of what there is, is composed of didactic essays that do nothing to actually change people's positions. More people change their ways of living due to their immediate social interactions than because they've read a tract on Truth. Rather





than bludgeon readers with a series of polemics *Communicating Vessels* puts together a series of short stories, interviews, and essays about radical authors.

The long rant about Librarians in *Communicating Vessels* is a typical piece. The author lambasts librarians for the change in libraries from book-centered to computer-centered. "The presence of so many computers in the library makes you wonder what is more important to librarians: books or computers (p.32)?" The author points out that the transition from books to computers is indicative of a larger social decay. Literature is being faded out of our world and being replaced by Myspace, and trite Internet posts. This change is creating people who not only don't understand where ideas are coming from but also lack the ability to think

critically. Literature takes time to digest while computers create a false sense of instant access.

This issue contains a short but entertaining essay on B. Traven, an under-appreciated anarchist author who depicts working life without heavy handed moralism or workist ideology the day-to-day lives of working people. His

accurate descriptions of working life serves as a condemnation of that life. The essay depicts the adventurous life of B. Traven, (a.k.a Ret Marut, Hal Croves,) a participant in the Munich Council Republic, and editor of *The Ziegelbrenner* (the Brick Burner). After his experiences in Germany as Ret Marut, Traven moved to Mexico where he took on his writing name. He shied away from the public eye, continually demanding that people look at his work and not their creator. While famed for "Treasure of the Sierra Madre," the real gold of Traven's work can be seen in his fictional accounts of every day working life, such as "Death Ship."

Traven's works are among the finest literary expressions that discuss working class trials and tribulations without sounding trite, corny, or rhetorical.

Included are both a

piece of writing by Kenneth Rexroth and a piece about him. I've not read much by Rexroth but enjoyed his historical memoirs. Also included is a short story about a dying wobbly, an interview with Morgan Miller on Pacific Northwest History and a review of "Joe Hill: The IWW and the Making of a Revolutionary Working Class Counterculture." [CJ]

Face to Face With the Enemy

no contact info

September 2007

12 pages, no price listed

This Vancouver Anarchist Newsletter demonstrates, along with some of the other publications reviewed in this issue, that Canada has a lot more going on than the US right now. Not only are a lot more things happening there but they are getting the word out. This newsletter is largely comprised of press releases from direct actions throughout 2007 around Free Trade, the 2010 Olympics (in BC), First Nations struggles, and the Vancouver city workers strike. While there is an analysis of the Black Bloc that occurred in Halifax this summer, mostly this newsletter is a series of report backs. [A]

From Idle Hands the Devil's Work: Radical Interpretations of Halloween

captainmissionismy

copilot@hotmail.com

anarchistpirates.blogspot.com

32 pages, no price listed

From the same person/people who put out *No Quarter*, the anarchist pirate zine, here is a work most valuable for its promotion of kid liberation, something that might be the only cultural benefit of the new rash of anarchist parents.

As noted by the zine, Halloween is the only popular holiday that is not religious or nationalistic, and for people who are trying to create a continuing, vibrant scene, times of celebration are important.

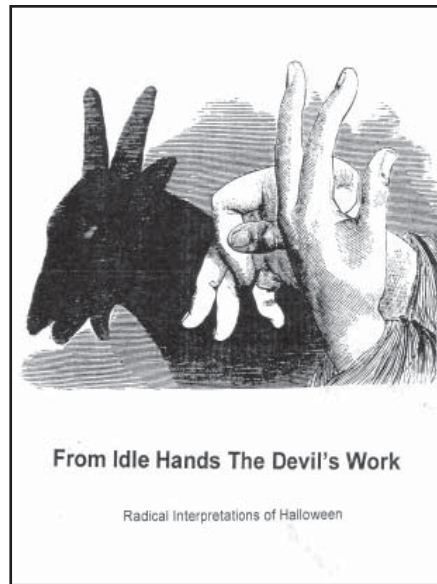
Contents include a reprint from T.A.Z. "Black Magic as Revolutionary Action" with spellish fun; an article with somewhat random notes on the possible origins of the festival (on Martinmas German children parade with jack o' lanterns, Romans had bobbing for apples for November 1, etc.); suggestions for costumes; two interviews—one of a producer of Radio Free School (a radio show for, by, and about homeschooled kids), the other of Hannah, producer of *Ax Wound*—a zine of academic feminists discussing what they like about horror films. This last interview was the weakest piece, since it

presented very little information. For example: the interviewer asked what films Hannah would recommend to someone who thought all horror films were misogynist, and recorded the list that Hannah provided without any explanation of what *about* any of the movies would make someone change their mind. This was also the only place in *Idle Hands* in which horror (mainstream culture's predominant association with this holiday) is alluded to, and there was no transition or explanation about why this topic was either alluded to so briefly, or ignored in the rest of the zine.

The final part of the zine was pages of recipes for vegan treats.

And on the final page, an anti-lifestylist and anti-halloween quotation from Murray Bookchin. Very nice in its understatement.

Technical difficulties: badly needed copyediting and the author of the "Costumes" articles, which was charmingly subversive in its costume suggestions—from Guy Fawkes to a feral child to a vandalized SUV, or any costume of a character that would have an excuse to yell at adults—couldn't seem to decide if s/he was writing for adults or children. [DM]



Killing the Artist

stephanemdc@hotmail.com

12 pages, no price listed

This reprint of a chapter from a book in French, *A mort l'artiste*, is a brief and scathing indictment of the ideal of artist-as-an-advanced-individual. Starting with the history of artists under the patronage of the wealthy and powerful (whether noble or church-based), the author(s) move on to point out that currently artists are merely workers with attitude.

"Presenting themselves as the victims of the commodification of culture, they are actually simultaneously its result and one of its principal agents... being the social category recognized notably for its 'right' to subversion and transgression, the artist remains the best agent for the neutralisation of critique and its aesthetic recycling."

While there is not that much that is new here—particularly lacking is an acknowledgment of the impact that aesthetics *do* have on our lives or the possibilities inherent in something like Oscar Wilde's determined dandy-ism—it could serve as an wake-up call for any self-righteous liberal arts major you want to smack down.

Available online at <http://lafeteestfinie.free.fr/> [DM]

Lance Hahn Memorial Zine

no contact info
40 pages, no price listed

If you have not heard of Lance Hahn you have missed out on one of the hardest working people in the DIY punk community over the past 20 years. He is best known for his bands Cringer and J Church but also wrote for *MRR*, *Giant Robot*, and his own zine *some hope and some despair*. His passing, due to kidney failure, is relevant here because he is one of the popularizers of a post-situationist perspective in modern music. He explicitly talked about practicing a post-situ politic and wrote about that perspective in sev-

eral well-known songs. What I have always appreciated about LH is that he never took the situationist analysis in the direction of the tragically hip (which is where bands like The Make-Up or International Noise Conspiracy have dragged the popular conception of the Situationist International). He was widely known as approachable and this memorial zine demonstrates that he was widely loved. It is comprised of pages of his notes, reflections by people close to him, and cut-and-paste style Polaroid shots of him and those around him. Long live Lance Hahn! [A]

Native/Anarchist Prisoner Solidarity

<http://wiinimkiikaa.wordpress.com>
24 pages, no price listed

This is a project of the *Wii'nimkiikaa* media consortium from British Columbia. The contents are primarily direct action reports about events happening in Canada. The John Graham case is covered, as well as the Six Nations resistance to urban encroachment. The revised COINTELPRO actions against the San Francisco 8, the New York 3, and the Green Scare are also reviewed. This cross-pollination of native and anarchist interests is a positive project that, one hopes, will find its way into many hands and

inspire similar bridges across political & cultural lines. [A!]

New York Rat #8
newyorkrat@riseup.net
12 pages, free

The *Rat* has improved its content. This issue has not only the usual report back of anarchist and anarchist-friendly activities in the NYC area but also some analysis. There are longer articles on borders (perhaps in preparation for the no borders camp in the southwest earlier this year), the “unconventional action” protests planned for next summer against the RNC, and a translation of an excerpt from *The Insurrection to Come* by the Invisible Committee out of France. [A!]

Out from the Shadows #2
116 West 30th St.
Lorain OH 44055
68 pages, no price listed

This is another intersection zine combining rewilding-style anti-civilization politics with a “radical vegan straight edge” perspective. Mostly the focus here is on reclaiming vsxe from the hardliners to “express and celebrate our identities.” This zine contains quite a few reprints including several from CrimethInc., Derrick Jensen, Feral Forager, and Evasion. That reprints comprise

the majority of the content reflects poorly on the zine. If you have so little to say for yourself why create a zine at all?

This ends up being particularly frustrating in that somewhere in the intersection of these ideas there is a lot new to say. Probably what needs to be said has little to do with all the jargon about Civilization, Leviathan, and Hardline. One of the greatest potentials of this zine is a line that isn’t explored but which cuts right to the heart of the new post-ironic politics of labeling and division: “We’re all hypocrites and it’s time to be honest about our shortcomings and personal struggles...”

Which in the context of the vsxe scene and puritanical anarchism is a deep sentiment that we look forward to seeing developed. [A!]

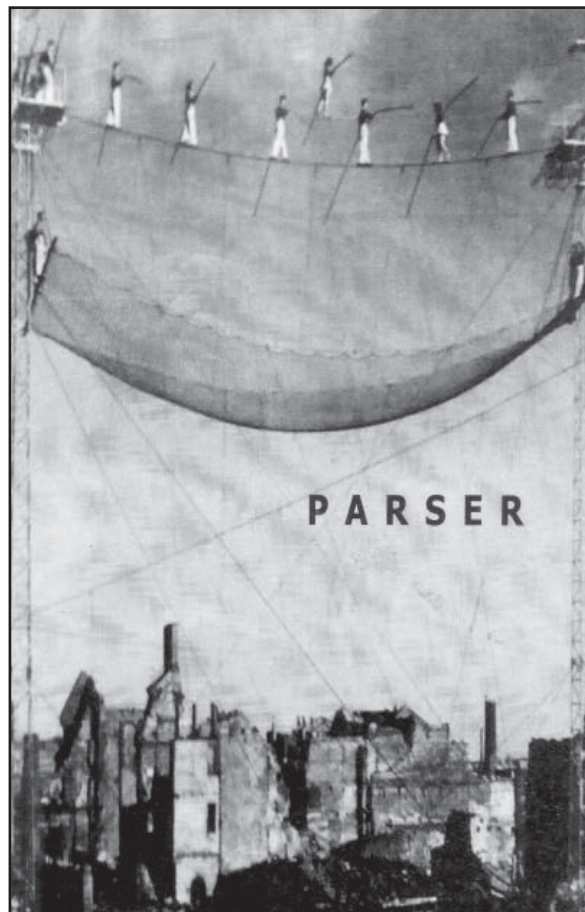
Parser #1
Box 2684 Stn Terminal
Vancouver BC Canada
V6B3W8
100 pages, \$12

This is an anarchist-friendly literary journal from BC edited by *Fifth Estate* contributor Roger Farr. *Parser* represents an interesting mélange. Poetry, Bonanno, Becker-Ho, and reviews of AK Press books probably means that few of the readers *in the know* will

be satisfied by the depth of the selections, but I’d argue it was worth publishing for this reprint (from Bonanno) alone “Speak to me of the future society, of anarchy, that in which you and I believe, describe its conditions of uncertainty to me, the unpredictability of relations between human beings finally freed of every constraint; with your calm, persuasive words, tell me of the ferment of the passions that break loose, the hatred and the desire for destruction that don’t disappear from one day to the next, the fear and the blood that don’t stop spreading and the flowing in the veins of a society that is finally different from every nightmare of the past.” [A!]

Prisoners’ Dilemma #2
Sept 2007
PO Box 95006
Seattle WA 98145
42 pages, \$2

This unassuming little zine contains plenty to chew on, featuring the theme “Rethinking Self-Defense.” While most sane people understand that self-defense is a human obligation, many people just don’t think about what it means concretely: to fight, to get hurt, to get thrown in jail, to spend days or months recovering from the trauma of being beaten. For some it merely means acquiring a firearm or taking martial

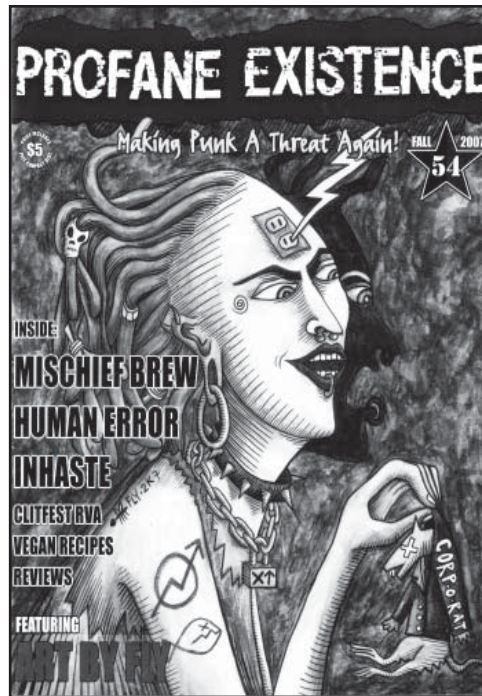


arts training. Most of the contributions to PD are first-hand stories involving most of these topics. Included is an interview with the Seattle-based self-organized women's self-defense project Home Alive. There's also an interview with the publisher of American Gun Culture Report, another zine from the Pacific Northwest. A couple of the authors came down to the Bay Area for the last Book Fair and BASTARD conference; it was good to get an out-of-town perspective on what the AJODA folks have been involved in. A quick look at recent police repression and surveillance rounds out this issue, complete with prisoner contact addresses. [LJ]

Profane Existence #54
Fall 2007
PO Box 8722
Minneapolis, MN 55408
82 pages, \$5 (includes CD) 6 issues, \$30

This long-running but much interrupted zine retains its bold subtitle, *Making Punk A Threat Again!* which begs the question: when was punk a threat to begin with? Was it when some folks who were attracted to the nihilistic, aggressively impolite, hoaxified antics of the Sex Pistols™ started to take their vacuous (but potentially provocative) slogans seriously? Was it when punkers began to look into the actual real

history of the anarchism that the Pistols™ merely parroted to shock the complacent bourgeois Anglo-American music world? Was it when *Profane Existence* began publishing? And to whom was it a threat? Certainly not the music or fashion worlds, which quickly gobbled up the more interesting aspects of the first generation of punk rock, pieced together its lowest common denominators and stuck them inside fake grubby packages to be sold back to the kids. Certainly not the British cops and social workers who may have been shocked (at first) at the extremes of typical adolescent anger and frustration, but who quickly came to understand that looking strange didn't make them any more threatening to the smooth protection of the status quo than the previous generation's skinheads or teddy boys—just another generation of delinquents and drug addicts. Definitely not their American counterparts. I witnessed an entire generation of local Bay Area punks bewitched by the anar-



cho-pacifism of Crass and Conflict, and when was pacifism ever a threat? It is certain that many more of today's under-40 anarchists have been introduced to anarchist politics through the DIY ethos of punk than through reading this journal, which isn't so horrible. Anyway, the current issue of *PE*, copying the format of its (unthreatening?) San Francisco counterpart *Maximumrocknroll*, contains the usual scene reports, some excruciatingly boring columns, plus 11 pages of ads, 12 pages of interviews with 3 different bands, 15 pages on a featured artist (FLY) and 16 pages of music reviews. I couldn't make out any particularly anarchist content, despite the anarchist origins of the magazine. [LJ]

The Rag #1
Autumn 2006
PO Box 10785
Dublin 1, Ireland
42 pages, no price listed

I visited Ireland for a few weeks many years ago. I don't have a strong knowledge of the place. I know the basics. It's strongly Catholic: everything shuts down on Sundays, abortions are even more inaccessible there than they are in the US (unlike the rest of Europe, which in general has no question about whether women should be able to have them). The violence of ongoing warfare; its status as one of the earliest colonies; these realities make Ireland a very different place than the US. So it is hard to position myself relative to the feminist theory that I have read from Ireland, which, to my eyes, seems so reminiscent of the 1970s.

The Rag has articles, like so many dozens of other feminist zines, on herbal medicines, on domestic violence, on why there are so few women in anarchist scenes, on midwives, on the value of anger, and so on. Sadly, the content is no more unusual than the topics. Women don't want to be part of anarchist scenes because there is a culture of macho posturing, for example. If I had a penny for every time I've heard that... I don't know if it's true, although some of the best anarchist posturing I know is done by women, myself included – what

I do know is that I would love to read something that doesn't talk about boys making room for girls, but perhaps talks about girls taking their own room. Power, in any meaningful sense, can *not* be given. It must be claimed.

The one (slightly) different thing in this publication is the article on sexworkers. While still couched uncomfortably in "men shouldn't see women as meat" language, it is at least one indication that feminist arguments have moved incrementally farther than they were when good feminists didn't talk about decriminalizing sex work.

There is a strong need for people, in groups and individually, to reconsider how women and men, girls, boys, and other people in general, interact with each other and themselves. There are ongoing, decades-old, centuries-old, problems that relate to how we value ourselves and each other. The urgency of that need is only concealed by rhetoric that was tired 30 years ago.

Like I said, I don't know. Maybe this stage of dialogue is an important part of what needs to happen in Ireland. But it would be great if somehow we could learn more from each other, instead of having to go over the same road again and again, reading the same tired signs that haven't yet gotten us where we want to go. [DM]

**Said the
pot to
the kettle**
www.tangled
wilderness.
org
24 pages,
free

This is an introduction to anarcho-feminism for an assumed white, male, and het audience. The treatment is understandably respectful and cautious and while it may raise hackles because of the author (who is also the audience) they will be somewhat minor. This is a politically correct document that hedges its bets along what could be characterized as leftist white guy lines. Here is an example. "Homophobic, racist, sexist and rape jokes explicitly reinforce oppression. But without knowing the complex background that makes each of us up, you can't know why a person says these jokes." On the one hand we can talk about the objective quality of oppression, while on the other we have to understand the history of those who oppress to understand their motivation?

Anyway, this introduction would be far more disposable than it is ex-



cept for the charming comic that starts the whole thing off. It is actually a metahistory of patriarchy that is entirely ahistorical but persuasive. It even has a graph showing how the length of woman's chains has grown over time. I got more out of the comic than the text. (A!)

Social Anarchism
#40 2007
2743 Maryland Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21218
112 pages, \$6

It is sad that within the anarchist milieu there is a lack of imagination. All creative joy has been sucked out of our comrades and replaced with a tendency to produce boring lifeless academic journals such as Social An-

archism. The highpoints of this journal include a survey of the anarchist movement with a total of a dozen respondents. There is also a fun review of "I am not Man, I am Dynamite." The reviewer has obviously never read any Nietzsche which makes it unsurprising that his review is composed of unoriginal attacks on the philosopher. The reviewer lambasts Nietzsche for his concept of "aristocracy," poo pooing him for encouraging individualism without benefitting the poor, the weak, and the lower classes.

College professors of Sociology, Feminism, Communications, and other radical/lefty pretensions will be ecstatic to add another safe anarchist writing to their collection. Just a little longer for tenure! [CJ]

Upping The Anti #5
Oct 2007
988 Bloor St West
PO Box 10571
Toronto ON M6H 4H9
204 pages, \$10 (Canadian)

It seems like every other issue of *UTA* contains something really interesting. This issue's roundtable discussion is about political prisoners (current and past) and their supporters, and while the editors fall into the typical anti-imperialist logic of supporting nationalists (so long as their nation doesn't have a state) and

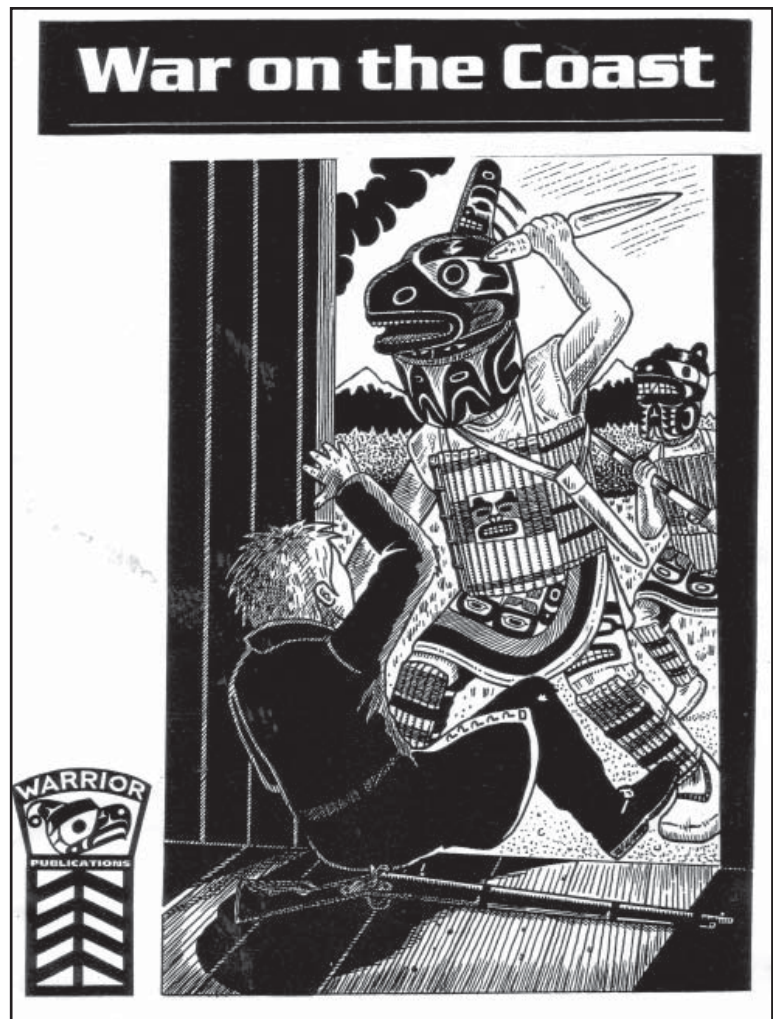


invoke the absurd upper case Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War category, there are actually a couple of interesting stories related in the interviews, especially that of anarchist ex-prisoner Ashanti Alston (although you'd never know he was an anarchist from the way the interview went). The other topical content is on the question of revolutionaries supporting Hezbollah. The anti-imperialist position is of course to support it (critically of course—which means what exactly: expressing doubts in private with trusted comrades?) because its members and followers are fighting against the Israeli Defense Forces (let's not talk about the attacks on Israeli civilians) up to and including the defeat of the IDF in Lebanon last year. Michael Staudenmeier brings up the troubling issue of antisemitism that's implicitly (and occasionally explicitly) part of an anti-zionist position that includes support for Islamist formations. *Left*

Turn founder Rami El-Amine responds by claiming that there's no antisemitism among Leftists, and besides, Hezbollah isn't totally hierarchical and they provide needed social services. Weak. The absence of more authoritarian Leftists is notable in issue 5. [LJ]

War on the Coast
Warrior Publications
no contact info
12 pages, no price listed

If you are not familiar with the artwork and politics of zigzag you are missing out on something special. His politics are indigenist anti-colonialism informed by anarchism and his artwork is cartoon-stylization of Northwest Coast Native art. It is comprised of strong lines and symbolic depictions of warriors in traditional attire. The story for *War on the Coast* is the brutal story of what the war between the residents of the Northwest Coast (although primarily in what is known now as British Columbia) and the encroaching Spanish and Russians. There are no depictions of linking arms and singing songs

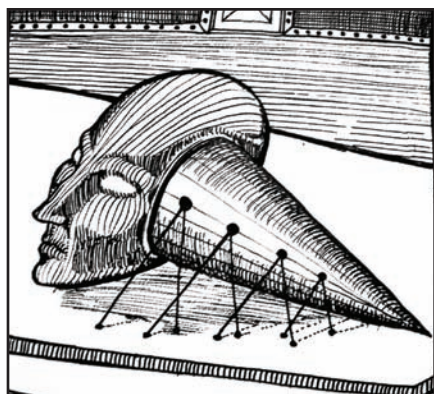


of protest; rather war axes, rifles, and mortar fire from ships into villages. This is a story that will piss you off, especially when you realize all we have are war axes. (A!)

Foreign Language

Abtohom #28
no contact info
68 pages

This is a very slick Greek publication with a glossy color cover. Within are articles on Parkour, Anti-Racist Skinheads, animal liberation, a review of *From Riot to Insurrection*, Food not Bombs, APPO, and ARA. (A!)



BAD MEDICINE

The Anarchist in the Cancer Center

By Joe Peacott

There are certainly frustrations associated with being an anarchist and working as a nurse. The entire health care system, like the rest of society, is riddled with authoritarian relationships, corporate penny-pinching and profit-taking, and intrusive government regulations. The state believes that individuals are not capable of taking care of themselves so it requires licensing of healthcare providers and institutions and prevents people from purchasing most drugs without a doctor's note. Besides restricting the number of health care providers and limiting people's choices in seeking treatment, licensing and prescribing laws institutionalize the hierarchical relationships between doctors and nurses, nurses and patient care techs, and, perhaps most importantly, between those providing care and those receiving it.

Since I evolved into an anarchist and individualist before I graduated from nursing school, I knew what I would be up against from the beginning of my career. But, more than 28 years later, I remain happy with my choice of an occupation. I love the work I do and enjoy my relationships with my patients and co-workers, including physicians and even some of the administrators. Besides enjoying my day-to-day work duties and the interactions with patients, I find my areas of specialty, cancer care and infusion nursing, intellectually stimulating, as well. This job

works for me.

Promoting Autonomy

Over the years I have tried to live out, as well as I can within the constraints of statist health care, my individualist and anarchist values. In my relationships with my patients, this largely takes the form of making sure the people I care for are knowledgeable enough about their illness and their care options to play a role in determining their treatment. All too often patients blindly follow the orders of their physicians, simply because they are physicians. While their treatment plans are generally ones I agree with, I believe people should know why they are getting the drugs or radiation they are receiving, how the treatment works, and what the side effects or other downsides are.

Patients sign form after form declaring they are giving informed consent to this or that treatment or procedure, but most of them are ill-informed, at best. This is usually not the fault of any individual, but the result of a combination of things: physicians unable to take the time to fully explain treatments,

other caretakers who are not knowledgeable enough to answer patient's questions, and patients who are overwhelmed by their diagnoses and really do not hear or understand what they are being told. I see it as my job to make sure patients get the information they need when they are most ready to absorb it, so they can understand what is happening to them and make truly informed decisions.

I spend a lot of time explaining to people how to prevent or treat symptoms caused either by their disease or by the treatment they receive from me and others. Again, whether because they weren't told about them or didn't "hear" what they were told, patients often tolerate

treatable conditions, including significant pain, without seeking help from their physician. Something that complicates this piece of my work are the widespread myths about pain medication and addiction. It is not uncommon for doctors to undertreat people's pain and for patients to avoid taking narcotic analgesics because they are

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afraid they will become "addicted."

This is largely because of the crap the government has been peddling for years about "dangerous" drugs, as well as the punitive laws which sometimes scare well-meaning physicians into denying their patients adequate treatment. I consider counteracting misconceptions about pain relievers to be a key part of serving my patients well.

I like to think that by encouraging patients to be active participants



in treatment planning, enabling them take charge of maintaining their own health and comfort, and prompting them to question the prevailing myths and "expert" opinions with which they are presented promotes their independence and autonomy, even if it is only in this one area of their lives.

Nurses as Workers

The other part of my working life where I try to put at least a little anarchy into action is as a union activist. As a grievance officer in my chapter, I spend a fair amount of time advocating for nurses who have gotten into some form of trouble with the boss. I sit in on disciplinary meetings with nurses and managers, file grievances as needed and help people navigate the human resources and payroll bureaucracy when errors are made or people's contractual rights are violated. There is a huge disparity in power between management and labor, and unions, for all their faults, add a bit of protection for workers so that some limits can be placed on the ability of managers to discipline, discharge, and generally beat up on workers. Helping folks out and standing up to the powers that be can be enjoyable.

But there are also problems with traditional trade unions. For one thing the contract we sign with the hospital enshrines management rights and the power differential between those who own and run the hospital and the rest of us. The union is left in the position of just making sure that the boss doesn't go too far, but we can never challenge, at least through contractual means, the hospital's power to manage and order people about.

Perhaps the biggest problem is that few people actually take part in the life of the union. A few of us do all the work and negotiating and phone calls, while most people never do any more than vote for

officers or participate in contract ratification, if they do even that. Unions, even traditional AFL-CIO organizations, often have relatively democratic structures, at least on the local level, and have the potential to be a means to fight hierarchical organization and increase the power of individual workers, but they never seem to actually achieve this.

And finally, the relationship between union and management is regulated extensively by the government, so both sides can appeal to the state to settle disputes when they can't come to an agreement on their own. Sometimes the resolution favors the hospital and sometimes it works to the advantage of the union, but in either case it serves



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to reinforce the control of the process by government, something that is problematic for this anarchist.

What I Would Change

Inasmuch as I think that the philosophy and scientific basis of allopathic medicine are largely valid, I would hope that much of the work I do would still be done in some form in a free society. People will still get cancer and require treatment, and however ineffective allopathic therapies are at times, there is no

system of healing that works better. Of course, preventing illness in the first place works even better at preserving health, but that requires effort on the part of individuals. While I like to think that free people might take more responsibility for their own well-being and live more healthily in order to stay well and avoid having to deal with physicians and nurses, I'll believe it only when I see it.

What should change, however is the hierarchical way in which this care is delivered. That will require getting rid of professional licensure and other barriers to entering the healing occupations. Eliminating licensing by the state and regulation of practice by government boards would do away with the enforced doctor nurse-technician-patient hierarchy and allow consumers and providers of health care to contract for services however, wherever, and whenever they like. It would also allow providers to team up and practice jointly without one or some giving orders and others simply obeying.

I believe in ending the prescription system which keeps individuals from choosing and using the treatments they would like. This system forces patient to see state-licensed providers for even the simplest and safest medications, driving up costs and bolstering the image of the physician or other provider as parent or priest. We would also need to discard the irrational and punitive "scheduling" system which restricts access to pain medications and criminalizes their unauthorized use. Besides freeing up access to medicines in this way, we should also do away with laws granting patent protection and other intellectual "property" rights. These statutes allow drug manufacturers to charge exorbitant fees for the medicines they produce, an expense which is a key driver in the ever-increasing cost of health care.

Labor laws should be abolished, as well, so that in situations where there are bosses and bossed, the bossed would not be prevented by the government and its police from really taking on the powers that be. This society and its laws have institutionalized the concept that some people involved in a business should have the legal right to own it and run it, with everyone else relegated to the status of mere employees who can be dismissed at will. This idea that some stakeholders in an enterprise should have powers and privileges that are denied to others, including the ones who do the actual work and bring in the money which the bosses pocket disproportionately, is widely believed in this society, and needs to be challenged by anarchists before people will be motivated to reject it. Once people have come to see the injustice of capitalist ownership and management, the legal framework and enforcement mechanisms which uphold and defend this economic system can be confronted and defeated by those who are its victims.

Until Then

I have laid out above a few basic components of a strategy for changing the current model of health care in the united states into one more suited to free, autonomous individuals, whether they are receiving or providing care. I recognize that it is unlikely any or all of these changes could take place without a more widespread, revolutionary change in the rest of society. Abolishing the state, and with it the hierarchy and inequality it enforces is the only way I can see any real change taking place. Meanwhile, I intend to keep on caring for and empowering my patients and their families, and doing my best to make people think about how health care could be provided in a more humane, respectful, and libertarian way.



The Egoist Encyclopedia

by Wolfi Landstreicher

Writers Block

As we all know, good writers are never at a loss for words. No matter what the circumstance, what their mood, what the topic, they always know what to say. Their words flow like wine at a bacchanal...BULLSHIT!!!

As an anarchist and an egoist, of course, I reject any specialization, any attempt to create an identity for me out of the various things I do. Thus, I am only a writer in the same sense that I am a walker, a sleeper, an eater, a traveler... well, you get the picture.

Within the course of living my life, there is no single activity that I can do endlessly, no single activity that flows continuously. Even the pouring of fine ales down my gullet has to stop at times – the very enjoyment of inebriation requires this

(as do the immediate and long term needs of my body). And writing is an activity that requires a wee bit more skill and effort than savoring intoxicating beverages.

Writing itself comes in many forms. Anyone who is the least bit literate necessarily does a bit of writing, and those of us who get some pleasure from the activity use it to play many games.

It should surprise no one who is reading this that I write first and foremost for myself. In writing, I can clarify my ideas, express certain dreams and passions, communicate with specific individuals or with a larger group of anonymous readers with the possibility of creating new projects or discovering new accomplices. I have even been able to write erotic fantasies that have aroused me to the point that I couldn't finish writing them because other urges called me (perhaps someday I will publish a booklet of unfinished erotic tales...). But the very act of writing implies a desire to communicate with another – even if that other is simply your future self.

But of all the various ways of writing, the most difficult, I think, is writing for anonymous readers. You are writing because there is something you want to communicate, something specific that you want to express to these unknown others, these individuals that you know nothing about. There is no way of knowing how they will actually read your words. And if you also have no interest in evoking belief, in gathering a group of acolytes who turn your living ideas into dead dogmas, this means finding a balance between precision and fluidity, incisiveness and openness to new possibilities. And that balance can be quite difficult to attain, let alone maintain. It is most readily achieved at those times when your

life and your ideas correspond most closely—creating a flow between thought and activity, theory and practice, that gives them a dynamic unity.

But the realities of the current world (as well as those of the body) can often impose themselves, weakening or severing this link. Perhaps economic realities storm into your life mocking your desire to destroy the economy. Perhaps the state intrudes. Perhaps sickness saps your energy. And perhaps it is nothing external or physical imposing itself, but just other needs, desires, and impulses taking priority. Whatever the case, the written flow to anonymous others is dammed.

In itself, this is no disaster for an egoist like me. Of course, my life, my needs, my desires take priority for me. How could it be otherwise? What I put out in writing is always a gift, not an obligation (even if it is supposed to be a regular column in a magazine, like this). And I will do it on my terms (working it out, of course, with any collaborators). But I am a clever fellow, and when writer's block hits, and my greatest efforts just can't make my brilliant wit and biting sarcasm, my depth of thought and peaks of coherence, flow out onto paper, perhaps I can still come up with something light and slightly silly. Something like this.



Liana Doctrines The Politics Of Blame

So let's just say, hypothetically, that a container ship runs into a bridge and spills a lot of fuel oil into a bay, and the news networks decide to cover the story...what would be the first angle they would emphasize? Who is to blame for the mess, of course: was the pilot on drugs, drunk, or asleep? Was containment started by the right people at the right time? Who will pay for this disaster?

Blame asks for the names of the people responsible for something wrong or unfortunate that has happened. Judicial systems are founded on the concept of blame. In every conflict two opposing parties argue over who is the victim and who is the perpetrator; there is very little room for nuance in this polarized scheme. Religions reveal similarly dichotomized paradigms with terms and concepts like sinner and saint, or good and evil. As an anarchist I am more interested in why it is politically desirable for the state to use blame, and how conflicts or problems can be understood without playing into the roles prescribed by such a mind-set.

The use of blame is advantageous for several reasons. The black and white nature of blame lends itself perfectly to having an *other*, which allows governments (and churches) to garner support for their policies. For instance, blaming individuals for real or fictitious acts of rebellion and labeling them "terrorists" allows a government to justify the increased surveillance of its citizens, to mask

a collapsing economy, or validate a foreign occupation or war. Any desired changes to laws can be spun as solutions to a problem of these others. A population of others can also be exploited for monetary gain (eg re-building projects in war zones or domestic prisoners), or used as justification for any number of cutbacks to social programs.

Another benefit of having a paradigm of blame is the ability to dispose of influential opponents by pinning mutually created or fabricated atrocities onto them. As long as citizens accept these patsies, the government can do as it pleases. And lucky for the government, blame is in limitless supply, and cheap to manufacture.

Blame can be a seductive short cut for creating false resolutions to complicated, large scale problems. The average citizen has an interest in accepting this model of conflict resolution because it allows the majority to feel innocent, and requires no self-reflection or changes to the social order. All faults in the government are masked just enough for people to ignore them, which is more convenient for maintaining a daily existence inside the system. Of course, the use of blame works the same magic inside the anarchist milieu.

It is not difficult to come up with examples of how blame can sneak into a conversation between anarchists. It can look like someone asking questions such as: who was responsible for this? Who was bottom-lining that? Blame also can be disguised as a politically correct line, "We don't have more people of color, women, and age diversity in the milieu because such and such group hasn't challenged their non-revolutionary tendency to associate with people of the same

age, class, and race as themselves.” Blame can also masquerade as a call to action, as suggested by statements that begin with “We will never have a revolution unless everyone is willing to...”

It is tempting to blame each other as an excuse for our lack of headway in toppling the government, but this insidious practice is distracting to our efforts. Blaming one another causes us to lose perspective in what we are up against: we overlook the very purposeful complexity and diversification of the power of the state, and are tempted to think it would be simple to disassemble if we would all just work together and do one or two things differently.

The use of blame also encourages an anarchist conservatism by weeding out the more fringe behaviors, the destructive or controversial choices, which have implications that may be more difficult to comprehend fully. It cuts off new avenues of thought and action by confining us to one path of resolution when faced with a complicated situation. Is the spirit of non-conformity and dissent only appealing when it is pointed at the government?

A paradigm of blame fosters fear by promoting conformity to an unattainable standard of perfection; if an anarchist openly admits she committed an act which she regrets, and the general response is to condemn and then punish and/or ostracize her, very few people will want to step forward with their errors. Blame encourages people to hide their mistakes or hide themselves from the comrades they disappoint.

If we can't allow for fuck-ups, especially big ones, then there will always be allies hiding their remorse, or feeling like frauds.

The bigger pictures are veiled when we use blame; it uses a narrow interpretation of events which minimizes why people do what they do, and

the circumstances they are operating in. Understanding these influences can help us identify weaknesses in our movements, and show us where we could support one another in our struggles.

But it is difficult not to look for the person who is at fault when something goes wrong, and perhaps harder not to seek to punish comrades when we are adversely affected by their actions. We must find a way to challenge each other's choices and behaviors without the use of blame. So what is another way? How do we deal with the mistakes of others and ourselves without becoming punishing or moralistic? There is no simple answer, but there are some ways we might start to divorce ourselves from this divisive, state-approved approach to conflict.

Getting around the blame trap could start with rejecting the value system put forward by capitalists. Specifically, we could decline to valorize efficiency, logic, or perfection—all of which underlie the concept of blame. Also, changing our language around conflict, refusing to use the labels the government uses to assign polarized roles in controversies, (eg victim/perpetrator, guilty/innocent, truth/lie, or right/wrong), can remind us of the complexity of these situations, and encourage more creative resolutions. Not seeking the Truth of who is at fault when

problems arise is also key to leaving blame behind; instead, our primary aim could be a rich understanding of the people involved: their intentions, motivations, experiences, histories, and limitations. This approach could inspire communities to think of every

conflict as social in nature, problems we need cooperation to understand, analyze, and remedy. This collective response could help circumvent the assigning of blame and punishment by involving interested members of a community, rather than focusing on the questionable acts of a few isolated individuals.

Anarchists have used a variety of tactics to approach the problem of dismantling the state. Appreciating and utilizing this diverse approach is what keeps us vital and impossible to eradicate, and reminds us there is no one way to be an anarchist, and also no one person, group, or tactic to blame for our failure to accomplish our objectives. There are no rules about what strategies are most successful, and no laws to judge each other against. Each of us is free to hack away gleefully at whatever leg of the state we find most appealing or rewarding to attack.

Letting go of blame requires trust.



Trust that we're all doing something amazing... maybe something no one will ever talk about, but something secret that will continue to inspire us over the years, and something we can carry in our hearts forever.

Have something to say?

Write us

The Only Value is Science

Adjectives and Roadmaps without Anarchy

Despite the fact that Marxism has failed (in every form it has been implemented, which were quite diverse) to produce anything marginally close to its endless promises, it remains nearly as influential as ever in the revolutionary forum. This includes, much to my chagrin, Anarchism. Virtually every alleged “anarchist” ideal I have read in print for 20 years, be it political, sociological, economical, ethical, psychological, religious, etc., has effectively been a Marxist-based critique asserted with varying degrees of anarchistic vernacular and/or sophistication. Even this journal seems to bring “anarchists” together in the sense only of Marxist confrontation rather than anarchist dialogue. I cannot resist reading it nevertheless, because the writers are so damn literarily good at expressing themselves, but rarely am I deeply moved—the articles of Robinson and Halberstadt in #60 were remarkable exceptions which prove the rule. I am now lamenting, now that was anarchist dialogue, front to back, top to bottom, and I seem to be the only one who realized just how insightful and penetrating these essays were. The attractions of negation in lieu of affirmation, of anti-everything rather than pro-anything, and all subsequent ideologization is as strong as ever, even after Robinson and Halberstadt succeeded, to use a wonderful phrase from Emily Dickinson, in blowing the top of my head off.

Anyone who has ever really known me would declare me to be extremely open minded although sincere, opinionated but not judgmental, but I simply do not have any more patience with those who proclaim ideals that cannot by any means or stretch of the imagination be legitimately called “anarchism,” usually while denouncing, sometimes simultaneously, things that

are my ideals and I know beyond doubt to be legitimately anarchist. What this journal badly needs is a non-stop readiness on the part of its readers to diagnose all unacknowledged metaphysical and ideological presumptions behind the supposedly “objective” assertions of their authors. Here’s a nice example from #63: “Whether green or red, communist or individualist, activist or critical, anarchists spend as much time...” Am I the only one to see the elephant in the room? Just as certainly as you cannot be in California and Maine at the same time, so is it impossible to be “red” or “communist” and an anarchist. I despise the “that’s not real...” pedantry, but the line has to be drawn somewhere!

I do not know the sources or cause of such delusion, and really do not care to know; but whereas there are far more communist journals than anarchist journals, in content when not in name, can’t I respectfully expect the “red anarchists” to go there and argue? There can certainly be a green anarchist, but that is because there is no contradiction between the ideals. I do not want to debate Leninism and Trotskyism and Maoism, and so on, so I come here. Those who can deem a “red” or “communist” to be simultaneously an “anarchist” should go there. Go inject your Marxist ideology with anarchist terminology into their dialogue, where it belongs, and let us have this journal for Anarchism. If you think I’m exaggerating, then consider another gem from the same source, different issue: “While the anarchists should align themselves with neither priests nor scientists, churches are easier to burn down.”

I should not have to say more about this statement, but know that I must. First of all, it is simply a cowardly and ignoble statement, burning down a church because it’s “easier” than other targets. If I was invited to go along to help destroy with arson some cog or at least sym-

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bol of the system, and this is what I was told the “mission” was, I’d probably just kill all those involved for general purpose. But this isn’t a moral statement; not only am I not a Christian apologist, but I have never, even in childhood, been a Christian because my parents (one anarchist, one socialist) were pantheists from the Vietnam Era. But I still must object because burning down a church is not a revolutionary act; it is a vestige of Marxist filth still poisoning the minds of revolutionaries. Atheist religions like Jacobinism and Leninism had to eradicate all religious competition, just as Christianity had had to do in Rome, and simply disguised the agenda by falsely portraying priests as akin to politicians, because to attack them on religious grounds would have betrayed their own creeds as religions.

But not only is this statement ignoble and not revolutionary, it is

ter Luther, and the little secret that should be exposed because the facts are right there before everyone’s eyes, is that almost every priest-molester in the last 20 years molested boys. Doesn’t it seem odd that these priests never molested girls? The point is, they commit these acts because they are screwed-up men with perverse sexual desires, and that is what drives them into the clergy. Religion does not create perverses; it just offers a good refuge for those trying to overcome uncontrollable urges. If it was simply a matter of corruption, then most of these priests in the last 20 years would have been jumping teenage girls rather than teenage boys. Trust me, when a normal man is forced to suppress his sexual urges, he never resorts to sex with men. Forget television—in prison the men who jump other men had an urge to all along but were too “macho” to admit it—even to themselves.

My point for the digression is that there is no logical reason for “anarchists” to jump to the absurd conclusion that anarchists cannot align themselves with scientists and priests, so this is a Bolshevik bias that needs to be exposed to the light. All the revolutionary struggles in Central America were supported by the priests, without exception, and the same was true in Northern Ireland; and many of the most noble dissenters in the Soviet Union—an “anarchist” empire?—were scientists, perhaps Sakharov being foremost among them. So wherefore this animus for priests and scientists? Is it that most of them are nerdy wimps and that corporate executives and cops tend to be tougher? Show me an anarchist priest and scientist—I have known both—and I will align myself with them. Meanwhile, the closet Bol-



not even anarchistic. Who passes the law saying priests and scientists cannot be anarchist sympathizers? That’s news to me. Priests and scientists were the enemies of Bolshevism, and, again, this is what we have here disguised in anarchist vernacular. And I do not want to hear the threadbare horror stories of medieval inquisitions and contemporary molestations—the church lost that power in the century af-

shevik readily aligns himself with “reds” and “communists.”

What really makes me sad about the state of this “movement” is that, in the final analysis, it is simply anti-intellectual and anti-spiritual; not, as it supposes, based on logical anarchist principles reasoned out from premises to policy, but because to be intellectual and/or spiritual is difficult, and to simply be a nihilist is not. And because such an attitude is, a priori, antithetical to every virtue anarchy offers, we get a “movement” based primarily on its vices; and every culprit in the de-anarchizing of anarchism is obvious in and proud about his or her degradation of the Ideal. Each displays a shameless double standard, in which they presuppose that they have some way of knowing or justifying what they assert “objectively.” *Noli me tangere.*

Even critiques, like this one, cannot assail such Panglossian heights, because the more cogent and consistent the criticism, the more the Panarchist simply lowers him/herself by questioning the motive of the critique, as if truth and consistency are not their own reward. And then it’s a simple matter: the motivation of the critic is “analyzed” of course, in terms of the theory under discussion, which is not only absurd, but stupid—it presumes the truth of the ideology criticized in order to respond to the criticism. In short, it begs the question and a kick in the ass.

The cause will go absolutely nowhere until it adopts enough intellectual integrity to acknowledge the difference between a factual assertion and a value judgment. We are all entitled to our value judgments, anarchists more than anyone else, but discourse is silly and pointless when its participants cannot or will not distinguish between asserting what is the case and asserting what ought to be the case. You can be right or wrong (or a little of both) in making a factual assertion, but cannot be either in a value judgment, and that is the problem. If I seem to be pedantic, let me just offer another quotation, same source and by far my personal favorite:

“It is particularly surprising when an anarcho-primitivist accepts the law of natural selec-

tion...as the way that humans, or the world they live in, came to be. This surprise is tempered by the understanding that anthropology and evolutionary biology are bed-fellows in their theoretical interests—but anarchist they are not.”

Not only is there not a single anarchist principle in this statement, but it does not even contain a single factual assertion; it is all value judgment, and foolish at that. This is not an “anarchy without adjectives” but an anarchy without subject or predicate. I’ve been a real anarcho-primitivist all my life, born and raised, and yet I undertook six years of scientific education, as some of the best colleges in America, and believe 100% in evolutionary biology (including natural selection) and anthropology. In fact, I found biology and anthropology to be the most anarchistic fields of academia, especially sociobiology



and structuralism.

The problem is not that someone has ignorant beliefs; that is everyone’s right and I do not begrudge it much. But there is no factual content here for me to even respond to. I base most of my anarchism on evolutionary biology and anthropology, so all this statement is, as a value judgment pretending to be a factual assertion, is an insult—it proclaims that I’m not an anarchist at all. It does not say, “evolutionary biology and anthropology fail to take into consideration _____,” or are “used as propaganda tools for the government,” or any other factual assertion that can be right or wrong. In other words, it is not dialogue but a sneaky delimiting of the dialogue that can take place. I cannot come out in defense of evolutionary biology and anthropology because this smug statement has declared them irrelevant. I might as well defend

the Republican Party, right?

When “discourse” degenerates to this level, all that is said is evaluative but proffered as factual, and this evidence about what actually is true cannot disprove it. This ridiculous statement does not say that what I have to say is wrong, but that I have no right to say it in an anarchist forum. And then, to add insult to injury, it is put forth as if logical. Thus with the scientists, thus with the priests. And all for what? Exactly what is accomplished with all these arrogant metaphysical presuppositions announced as commandments? In order to serve as a value judgment, a value judgment must be presented and received as a value judgment, so that we all know that a factual assertion is not being made and speech is thus instigated rather than truncated. Maybe yesterday a rogue priest in the Vatican, a rogue

scientist in Microsoft, and the most brilliant evolutionary biologist and anthropologist on Earth fortuitously came across AJODA, and were immediately intrigued, and got excited thinking that they

could serve an anarchist cause by helping to topple the system from within—and then they came to the smug proclamations of a thoughtless fool and—not knowing any better—found they were a priori in the out-group and put down the magazine forever?

I am, of course, being hyperbolic and melodramatic, but only because sometimes the reduction ad absurdum is a useful method for making a point. Whenever anyone, anarchist included, declares that “humans are naturally _____,” flags should immediately go up. They do when some evangelical states that, “homosexuality is unnatural” or that “all abortion is murder,” and so on, so why not when someone within our own ranks is degrading not only dialogue, but our cause? Did our Panarchist mean that all or most evolutionary biologists and anthropologists are actually antithetical to anarchism,

or did he mean that all anarchists should be antithetical to anything they do not understand? Maybe if our publications were a little more philosophically sound, our numbers would grow with ever increasing philosophical talent?

It is time for anarchists to stop making synthetic statements, also, and pretending that they are analytic. $2+2=4$ is true by definition, tautologically, and as such is analytic. “Evolutionary biology cannot be anarchistic” is true only if the assertion can be matched to evidence, and thus is synthetic. Dogmas disregard the distinction; anarchism should not. To posit a synthetic statement as an analytic statement is to foreclose the possibility of factual refutation from the start. We do not need to go out into the world to prove to ourselves that $2+2=4$; we do need evidence, and I challenge anyone to produce it, that evolutionary biology cannot support anarchism. Our sage has obviously observed so many legal systems in nature that he deems the claim to be analytic, but I want to see this evidence before it is accepted as such. Value judgments do not attempt to say anything about the world, and we are all misled when we forget this. The Panarchist’s ought is not my is. I will end with a final quote, which I assert is factually false and logically absurd: “the bulk of our problems are social and the solutions are not going to come from a lab or from hardy individuals who are willing to make personal sacrifice in our name.” Why not? I say solutions that will prove successful will come only from a lab and hardy individuals willing to make sacrifices. I am a hardy individual who can make problem-solving item in a lab—so am I not an anarchist, or is this Panarchist an idiot? I wish he would stop telling us what others “cannot” do for us and tell us one thing he can do for us. He better be able to do a lot; in order to compensate for those he has precluded from our cause.

All you closet-Bolsheviks can pretend to be anarchists, but if I have anything to say about it—that is, if my speech is not stifled—then your wordplay will no longer go unexposed. A Marxist, not an anarchist, defines a person as the

product of the economic stage of society in which he or she lives. A Marxist, not an anarchist, perceives human nature only in terms of environment. "The real nature of Man is the totality of social relations," asserted Marx, and our Panarchist agrees. If a human being is nothing more than the totality of his social conditions—that is, if we accept Fascism or Communism as a world view—then anarchism is, by definition, pure nihilism. This is a logically inevitable conclusion: anarchism seeks, a priori, to eliminate "social" relations—political, economic, sociological, moral, etc.—and in doing so also eliminates "human nature" until, our cause victorious, it disappears altogether and we are automatons.

Such nihilism has made Sartre, another Marxist, popular among sophisticated "anarchists," and leads to the same result. If human nature is not in some degree sociobiological—that is, based on species-specific patterns—and so we can indeed simply "choose" what we are, then by what standard do we make such a choice? Can you see the absurdity of all these global declarations? If we have no human nature in the sense of evolutionary biology and anthropology, and may "choose" not just who but what we are, upon what foundation is the choice made? A choice presupposes a chooser, and thus this principle, not its choice, is "human nature," because the former not the latter is primary. Such bootstrap philosophy is futile, and all your "existence precedes essence" claptrap is banal.

Despite my obvious annoyance at lazy-mindedness, I am, like any good anarchist, ultimately a pragmatist, and realize the importance of value judgments. The truth or falseness of any judgments is not, necessarily, an affirmation of or objection to that judgment. Sometimes the issue is not whether an idea is analytically or synthetically true, but to what extent it sustains, promotes, advances, etc. life in-itself. I'm only annoyed north-by-northwest; I know a hawk from

a handsaw.

PG

Aragorn! responds:

I share your stated aversion to Marxism, although I would add a distaste for the rhetorical-de-nouncement-as-political-practice that you evidently have embraced. To your specific question, I believe that it is possible to be red (as in Marxist and/or workerist) and an anarchist.

What is in a word? Anarchist is a description of a set of goals, the process by which these (and other) goals are achieved, and the people who freely associate around these goals. It is not merely an abstraction, to be lived ATR, and the list of political characteristics that one prefers in contradistinction to all others. It bores me to be this pedantic, but either anarchism is a vibrant and lived political approach to acting in this world or it isn't anything. In this context it means that there are many different, often incompatible, approaches to anarchism; this is a strength.

This desire for (ideological) coherence isn't one that you are alone in desiring. My issue with most red anarchists isn't their utopianism but their sanctimonious-



ness and sectarianism. This might seem like odd opinion coming from these pages, but I find arguing about who has the most righteous plan, goals, and active agent to be a total waste of time. It's socializing by hitting one another on the head with a ball-peen hammer.

Manicheism is the problem and is what I was talking about in the articles you mention.

To add insult to injury, I attribute this characteristic to the same things you do. I wouldn't go so far

as to say that "Marx did it," but the orientation of anarchists that lines them up like little magnets pointing towards a hypothetical Revolutionary Pole has a vocabulary. It has a way of understanding People, Organization, and Politics that is fixed; but even more, its priority lives there, in abstraction, theory, and in the hierarchy of defining terms correctly by the terms of your sect. This approach to politics has a genealogy, and while Marx is in this genealogy, so are most anarchists.

You rail against my criticism of the anarcho-primitivist acceptance of Natural Selection and then demand acknowledgment for being a scientifically trained anarcho-primitivist (from the best colleges in America even). My contention isn't that Natural Selection doesn't exist (in the lab if no other place), but that political people are susceptible to leaving behind their critical facilities when it comes to Natural Law. Those with an ax to grind (what you would call a priori conclusions) look for real (as in physical, provable, quantifiable) evidence that they are right. This is especially true for those who have a formal education, scientists first among them.

I would agree with your criticism of the distinction between facts and opinion if, for instance, I were to have said that Natural Selection is wrong. That would have been an opinion. Instead I said that the disciplines of anthropology and evolutionary biology are not anarchist. This is not an opinion. This doesn't mean that anarchists cannot extract useful things from these disciplines, but I would like to believe that what they would create from these extractions would look entirely different than these (professional, academic, capitalized) disciplines do today.

The conceit of too many scientifically trained people is that their knowledge is special, that it really matters, that it is real, that the things that they do in a laboratory are the only things that matter, and that it is a special kind of person who is willing to make the sacrifice (even though it isn't a sac-

rifice at all because science is so awesome!) for the benefit of us all.

Declarations about Human Nature say far more about the declarers, their priorities and bigotries, than they do about either humanity or nature. As far as I am concerned, the philosophical fascination with something called Human Nature and the variety of different political parties' answers to the question about what to do about it is the story of Western Civilization. I believe anarchists should interest themselves in different stories.

Ban Ego Porn?

Once, in the '80s, Bob Black wrote an essay called "The Abolition of Work." It was very good. Not, perhaps, a spectacularly original contribution to anarchist theory; it was more a concise, funny, and extremely well-argued distillation of ideas widely bouncing around in anarchist circles at the time. It remains one of the better anarchist propaganda pieces, in my opinion, especially useful to show to students or others about to face the prospect of paid employment. Writing that piece was, as far as I am aware, the only positive thing Bob Black has ever done for anyone.

I mean, sure, I know: even if you just look at it statistically, the chance that writing that essay is really the only good thing Bob Black has ever done for anyone else has got to be pretty low. It's hard to imagine Bob Black has never, at least, held a door open for a stranger, took care of someone's cat, or given a friend a ride in his car. I only really know his anarchist practice. As an anarchist, though, Black confines his activity to writing, and since "the Abolition of Work", his writing has hammered away relentlessly on one theme and one theme only: why everybody else sucks. Also everything else: Black has also inveighed against feminism, technology, the Left, direct democracy, any other sort of democracy, anarchism, punks, veg-

etarians, and pretty much anything else... He has been able to come up with something nasty and usually personally insulting to say about almost every other anarchist writer that has come to his attention.

Is this, one might ask, because he is so passionately attached to his own vision of liberation that he must defend it against all comers? No. Not really. It's not clear Black actually has a vision, other than a broad feeling of approval for Kahlari Bushmen (who he is able to like, I suspect, largely because he's never met or talked to one, since anyone he actually knows he appears to find insufferable). In fact, he's so passionate about using any shit available to throw that he makes no pretense of consistency. For instance: in his recent attack on every book ever published by AK Press, Black had the incredible chutzpah to condemn AK for celebrating Black Panthers partly on the ground that the Panthers were "sexist"—this coming from a man who once summed up his attitude towards women's issues by the bon mot, "if sisterhood is powerful, shouldn't feminists douche more often?" He'll use anyone's cause to mock and pummel anyone else's, because that's really the only point.

Why do editors continue to publish this sort of thing? If someone just took a piece of paper and wrote "I hate you I hate you I hate you" over and over, would anyone publish that? Why exactly is this different? Admittedly, there was a time his attacks were clever and often funny, but in recent years, he's lost even that. By now his prose is often completely incomprehensible. Consider the following sentence about myself in the AK piece:

"And there is an anthology of 'academic scholars and engaged individuals' (yawn) co-edited by fired professor David Graeber, an example of a familiar figure on the AK scene: a social democrat who calls violently suppressed the Party."

Huh? I don't have a clue what that even could mean. Even the quote is wrong: it has come to the point where successfully copying five words from a catalogue is be-

yond Black's mental capabilities. The rest of the sentence seems to consist of two chunks of flotsam from different word files accidentally fused together, like a statue with a leg where the nose should be. (And no one noticed this?)

When Black does succeed in producing a coherent sentence, it invariably serves no purpose other than to hurt someone. The attack-dog style he employs was first developed, of course, by Stalinist or Trotskyite polemicists, but as we all know Marxist sectarians write the way they do because they have somehow managed to convince themselves that if they win enough arguments, it will eventually help spark the Revolution. There's no evidence Bob Black believes anything of the sort. He's not trying to build or further anything and there's no reason to believe he thinks that even if he did win all the arguments, this would further world revolution or industrial collapse. He is a sectarian without a cause, a Sparticist without a Party. If nothing else, he must at least be aware that if 98% of anarchist writers, publishers, and organizers really were the liars, frauds, scheming authoritarians, morons and police agents he claims them to be, then the same would have to be true of anarchist readers, so what would be the point in trying to convince them of anything?

What is the point? Why do anarchist magazines print this sort of thing? It's a particularly pressing question because a large proportion of what you read in anarchist magazines has come to adopt this same, odd, vitriolic style. Its authors' will usually first argue true anarchism means absolute personal liberty and self-fulfilment, unconstrained by any sense of responsibility to anyone or anything else—which is fair enough, perhaps, individualism is one longstanding strain of anarchism—but then for some reason, when it comes time to put that absolute personal liberty into practice, the only thing they can think of to do with it is to sit in front of a computer writing sectarian attacks

on other anarchists. This is the best they could come up with? This is fun? Shouldn't they be off having perverse group sex on public property, or waking up their neighbors with loud music at 4AM, or fishing with dynamite or something? Stalinists after all acted like they did because they thought they had to; these guys do it because apparently, that's what they really like to do.

But of course there's the real secret. On some level, nastiness is fun. This is why Bob Black can get published, and why so many anarchists not only read, but enjoy his work. Just like we find it hard not to identify with schoolyard bullies, we find it hard not to find a secret thrill in watching someone totally demolish a weak opponent—which, on paper, is easy to do, since on paper you can make your opponent pretty much as weak as you want to. Of course as anarchists, we would never admit we identify with bullies. But we also are heirs to an atrocious Leftist tradition of sectarian argument, at this point so internalized that whenever



we see certain classic polemical moves and phrases, we automatically assume we are dealing with an (at least somewhat) legitimate form of politics. What Black, and others like him, have really done is detached this tradition from any moorings in revolutionary vision or organization whatsoever and turned it into a form of entertainment in itself. Obviously he can't admit it. If you came clean about this sort of thing, it would never work. So Black must make constant invocations of old-fashioned, Stalinist-style ideological purity

("If anarchists are capable of authoritarian attitudes and ideological incoherence, I should no more hail one as a comrade, sight unseen, than I would a state trooper or used-car dealer") and statements insisting that really, there actually are one or two anarchist authors or publishers—yes, even aside from himself—who have some redeeming qualities. But all that is really just an alibi. The real point is just being able to tell everyone else that they're a piece of shit.

Recently there's been a debate in anarchist circles about "riot porn"—is it okay to get off on videos of flaming barricades or battles with cops; is it really political or just cheap macho entertainment? Myself, I don't find such pleasures especially problematic. Far more dangerous, I think, is what I'd call "ego porn". Ego porn is work that is written for no purpose other than the joy of feeling superior, of making a show of crushing and demolishing a (usually imaginary) opponent for the sheer fun of it. It's fun because it allows those who read it to vicariously experience the same thing, while telling themselves that by doing so, they are engaging in political debate. (In fact, that makes it even better, since that way they get to feel self-righteous too.) This is the only reason why anyone still reads Bob Black—because almost everything he's written since "The Abolition of Work" is pure ego-porn.

Perhaps it's not surprising our current movement has generated this sort of thing. The beautiful thing about contemporary anarchism is the emphasis on listening, compromise and mutual understanding. All those feminists Black reviles have, in the end, made a profound impact on decision-making process, and ultimately, our political culture. The problem with mutual understanding though is it takes an enormous amount of emotional energy. Being nice all the time can become exhausting. Especially when one is struggling with the suspicion that most of one's comrades may well be idiots or assholes. It's hard not

to at least occasionally wish you couldn't just totally give it to one of them. Hence the popularity of ego-porn.

Maybe if you look at it that way, it's really not so terrible. We all need the occasional catharsis. It's probably better than watching professional wrestling—at least you're not encouraging steroid use. The danger comes when we fool ourselves into thinking this has anything to do with politics. WT

Old Grudges Die Hard

Your comment about our journal in the What Others Are Saying column in the most recent Anarchy is most misleading.

I can understand why Bob Black and those who choose to associate with him object to having his misrepresentation of sources and his long career as a police informer exposed, but no matter how often you choose to restate these false claims they remain just that. The Italian syndicalists - with the exception of a handful of Marxists who briefly entered the Italian Syndicalist Union - did not support the Italian fascists, and indeed bore a disproportionate share of the brunt of its repression. Your clumsy attempt to dance around these facts does nothing to change the facts.

However, it seems this clumsy dance is in reality simply a subterfuge to defend your resident police informer and to smear me. That Bob Black is not only a police informer, but a serial police informer, is a fact beyond dispute.

There is a world of difference between repeatedly calling police to urge a SWAT team to raid someone's home, replete with lurid tales of weaponry and drug stashes to put them in a trigger-happy mood, and pointing out to his publisher that Black's misappropriation of

one's name for commercial purposes is unlawful.

However, your reference has only the most glancing relationship to the facts. I never threatened to sue Autonomedia for libel, rather I wrote them pointing out that using my name to peddle Black's nonsense was not only wrong but also was in violation of New York State law barring the use of a person's name or likeness for commercial purposes without their consent. I noted that the situation was aggravated by the fact that the "quote" attributed to me in their back cover blurb was a figment of Black's self-promoting imagination.

I never made a "pre-trial settlement offer," and indeed there was no litigation. What I demanded was that they remove the false endorsement from the book - perhaps by making Black himself affix stickers covering it over.

In return, Black contacted my employer in an attempt to cost my job and induced one of his associates to repeatedly phone and write me threatening to blow up my home with plastic explosives. Autonomedia, wisely enough, evidently decided not to proceed with publishing more of Black's drivel. The fact that Anarchy does not object to Black fraudulently trading



on another's name and reputation speaks volumes about what passes for ethical standards in your circles, as does the fact that you continue to allow this serial police informer to write for your publication. The anarchist movement that I know and am a part of has no room for police, nor for the rats who serve them. Jon Bekken, Philadelphia

Lawrence responds:

Not being familiar with the subtleties of litigation I hereby withdraw my mischaracterization of Bekken's use of (his then-employer) New York State University letterhead to issue the legal threat against Autonomedia in 1993; indeed, the dispute did not concern libel, but was only about "stealing" his name. The demand to affix a sticker covering up the offending theft ("so that the public will not be deceived into buying this book with my supposed recommendation"—that's a laugh!) was not the only condition for him not suing Autonomedia, however. The others were that they were to remove his name from "any future editions, and provide me with a copy of the book and of its publishing agreement with Black for my records." With that, Bekken's grievance against Autonomedia would be settled. For Bob, he added more: "Let Black agree never again to claim my endorsement for his writings or ideas, and donate one-half of the money he is making from sales of Friendly Fire to the International Workers Association (AIT) secretariat" [quoted from personal correspondence dated 17 August 1993; copies available on request].

Saying that Bob has a "long career as a police informer" implies that this is how he makes his living. Bob has never been compensated or rewarded, financially or otherwise, by any law enforcement agency. Be that as it may, it is the public and published opinion of the editors of this journal that contacting the police as Bob has done is unfortunate at best, and we neither support nor condone it. Nonetheless, it is our choice to continue to publish Bob's essays and reviews in our journal because of the political relevance of his writing to the wider project of anti-state discussion and debate, the excommunicatory pronouncements of his opponents notwithstanding. Similarly, we will continue to offer George Orwell's Homage to Catalonia as a subscription premium despite the fact that he was an actual policeman and became a propagandist for the British Empire during WWII.

It is also worth pointing out that, even if he were a "career po-

lice informer," Bob would still not have the requisite executive authority with anybody "to urge a SWAT team to raid someone's home." This hyperinflation of Bob's supposed abilities to fuck with people says a lot about Bekken's imagination. Evidently, and with appropriate apologies to Voltaire and Bakunin, if Bob Black did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.

COWs Not Bullied

I appreciate you all reviewing our publication and writing about us. It's always good to get feedback from others. However, in "What Others Are Saying" (Anarchy #64, p. 65), Lawrence Jarach jumped to a number of false assumptions, then ran with them.

Just to straighten things out, Challenging Oppression Within (COW—yes, we are aware of the irony) is a working group very much WITHIN the Earth First! movement (see EF!J November-December 2006 for more info on COW).

COW came together at the 2006 national EF! summer gathering as a result of a series of discussions about what we can do as EF!ers to address the patriarchy and instances of oppression within our EF! movement--hence the name.

Like it or not, EF! does have a history—and a reputation—as a place where patriarchy can run amok. The Rhizome Collective, our hosts for the 2007 Organizers' Conference, were aware of that reputation and simply asked the organizers of that conference to set up a workshop specifically addressing sexual assault. The organizers asked COW to do it and COW agreed.

There is no bullying going on--just an earnest attempt to get us all to work on our shit. I sincerely hope Mr. Jarach doesn't see that as something he wants to ridicule.

donny
Earth First! Journal editor,
Challenging Oppression Within
member, longtime EF!er

As Opposed to JZ's

Everything Bob Black turns to shit. And who's fumbling for Bob Black's zipper? Lawrence Jarach? Works for me.

Barney Rubble

Little Anarchist Gone Trucking

A.J.O.D.A.

Back in the mid 90s I took a dollar bill and made an anarchy sign out of the pyramid/eyeball logo and on the outer perimeter it read "will America win this big game of 'Risk' and conquer the world?" Of course my aim wasn't to justify the actions of America, but to make the obvious to naïve people. I wonder how many hands that dollar bill past through. Cause years later I was looking at *Metal Edge* magazine and a band called Ministry had an album just out called "Houses of the Mole" and its cover had an anarchy sign/pyramid-eyeball logo on it and they used their name for anarchy signs like this:

My point is that sometimes we do get the message around by just word of mouth.

More recently I took a trip. I called it "Anarchy on Tour, 2001." My husband and I took a hitch-

hiking/backpacking trip across America. We only got to Texas but that was plenty long enough for my "BIG Mouth" to make a difference. People of all walks of life picked us up. I took poles on them feeling them out on what they believed in mostly politically. When we'd drive away out in the middle of nowhere I would tell them what I thought about things and that I thought it would be better off like it was out there.

A lot of the truckers were radicals and didn't know it. I told one of them that I thought voting was useless but the power was in the people because by God if we all quit our jobs, that would be an act of war because we'd cut off their supply line. "Coyote," a trucker, went mad! He fuckin loved the idea. You know that great big applause you get after a good song on karaoke? This was even better. Since I saw that he'd got my point. I told him to spread the message or "pay it forward," and later that year, or the next, they had one hell of a May day celebration shutting down Seattle again!

I don't use computers so I hope you still get this. Stay the course. I'm trying to make it easy for people to subscribe to your magazine so you don't go broke. If or when I could make a useful contribution (money wise) I will. It is quite interesting how people who've never heard of the anarchist movement have been some of my favorite students.

I take it back. I use computers only to obtain documented information so dummies will see that I know what I'm talking about.

Dirt on the Greens

Dear AJODA

Thanks for sending me those pamphlets and zines. I appreciate your support. I pointed this out to Bob Black, and now I'll point it out to you. You printed an article on the Green Scare. Making a martyr out of people who are not anarchists merely to spread/disseminate anti-government propaganda is wrong. Yea it makes the government look bad but truth is a better weapon. The people receiving the harshest sentences according to the column on page 13 [issue #64]: Stanislaus Meyerhoff and Kevin Tubbs (13 and 12 years respectively) are not anarchists by any means. I was in county jail with Meyerhoff. Later on I was his cellmate at the Federal Detention Center in Sheridan Oregon where they house inmates who are still pretrial or pending designation. While in county jail Meyerhoff informed on Bill Rodgers among others. He drove him to commit suicide to save his own skin. At Sheridan while Stanislaus was my cellmate he continuously tried to convert me to Christianity, perpetually trying to shove religion down my throat.

Kevin Tubbs was also the same way. He used to walk around the unit with a Bible in one hand and a cross around his neck. In addition I met a number of crystal meth addicts and crackheads who cut down powerlines and stole railroad ties etc to sell for scrap metal to support their drug habit. They as a result got charged under the PATRIOT Act and labeled as eco-terrorists. So you want to promote pity for Christian snitches and drug addicts that's your choice but I think it's wrong. What drove Bill Rodgers to suicide wasn't just the FBI's revival of McCarthyism. The blame also lies on weakminded individuals who back down under interrogation and turn into cooperating defendants.

Anyway, other than that it's a great zine. Keep up the good work. Print my address.

Kyle Nonneman #68528-065
P. O. Box 33
Terre Haute, IN 47808

Another Comrade in the SuperMax

To: the Oakland Association of Autonomous Astronauts

Greetings. Just finished #61 of Anarchy zine and was amazed that I felt a real connection with your deep and thought-out declamation on our place, what is real and ending with love. I too tug and stretch my consciousness and perceptions, so I know that as long as questions continue to be asked and searched for, there are no real answers. That imaginary boundary cannot be reached. Judgement rest on our shoulders alone.

During my prepubescence I reached a point in my consciousness where a peace of mind took hold. I realized that if I didn't care whether I lived or died, then I don't need to fear the consequences of anything I willed to do or thought of to express to effect a change in others. Therefore I could do anything I wanted—I am Free! A true turning point can be grabbed a hold of by anyone who desires it to be theirs. Yet it requires courage which will remain within them forever.

You also mentioned a Type IV civilization trying to escape into the chilled universe where nothing gets destroyed. Yet failed to speak of a Type Zero broken civilization that is trapped by a Prime Directive which doesn't allow the defeat of the ignorance of the few who control and manipulate so many.

I would appreciate learning about your association.

"What is of supreme importance in any war is to attack the enemy's strategy" —Sun Tzu

Who really owns governments? Those are the ones to effect real change by drawing their attention to the issues by eviscerating them to see first hand that the strategy they are using for profit is also their biggest problem. Affect their profit margin, then witness first an unwillingness to change and denial. As more pressure is applied, while their strategy continues to loose money—real change must take its place. Chaos arouses and stimulates, which causes most



Peace Love and
Anarchy

The Little Anarchist

to be uncomfortable. So those who can, will do whatever they must to bring back a sense of order and their profits back up. Out of Chaos, comes Order. It's a universal Law! Physics proves it all the time. We owe our very existence to it. Cells are warring all the time. Where are those unique cells of strong will who must bring about the cause of change called Chaos?

I would like your input on what I've written and find someone to correspond with to learn more about you. As you see, I'm in prison. Imprisoned for trying to kill a president. As you can imagine, I'm not very popular with those out there.

Take care. Stay strong.

Francisco Duran #19588-016
US Penitentiary
PO Box 7000
Florence CO 81226

How the Trolls Treat Us

Hello, my name is Brian. I am confined to this gulag in Missouri... I am a prison activist for all the wrongs we endure; how trolls treat us... I have been protesting here, in the hole, for the past 17 months because I refuse to be a slave. For these trolls the 13th Amendment needs to be abolished! No more prisoner forced slave labor. Top pay here is 70 cents an hour. While these trolls make 60-80 million a year. Help spread the word. Abolish slavery! Prisons aren't about crime control, they're about for-profit repression. In fact, they are



a huge, government-run criminal enterprise, wildly profitable, and completely paid for by ripped-off taxpayers. Think about prison environments for a moment. People screaming day and night. Rape and the spread of serious disease—such as AIDS, hepatitis, venereal diseases—is epidemic as if deliberately cultured in a Petri dish. Violence, longing, bitterness, hopelessness, and self loathing are coupled with the school of criminality. Useful programs within this madhouse environment have been gutted. There is no real rehabilitation, no social re-entry programs. People are left to live or die in this minimalist warehouse nightmare. Then, after consuming the prime of many lives, people are spit out of their dungeon and shoved into the glare of day without any clothes, housing, job prospects, or money and the vast array of laws and stipulations nearly guarantee that parolees will soon return for some violation or new “crime.”

No masters, no slaves.
Brian Lester #1079999
South Central Correctional Center
255 West Highway 32
Licking MO 65542

Inspiring Hope in Baltimore

Dear Anarchy Mag,

I just finished reading the essay “The Age of No Opinion” by Liana Doctrines in issue #64 and I have to say it was one of the most inspirational encouraging essays I have ever read. As a college student, it's so easy to feel disheartened and discouraged by the amount of apathy and so-called “realism” around me. This article reminded me the vision is still there.

Thanks,
Hope G
Baltimore, MD

Screwed by Mom and Pop

Dear AJODA,

You all are doing a great job, but I had to laugh: with the cover I immediately thought you were going to do some kind of analysis/dissection of anarcho-capitalism. I should have known that that's a done deal for most of your readers.

It was interesting reading about AK Press and the mentality of “small business,” aka “mom and pop” business. It has been my experience as a working guy that small businesses can often be more oppressive than large corporations. Small businesses have a way of talking about how “we're all one family here” when it is convenient for them, and when it is not convenient, jettisoning all of that rhetoric. That has happened to me in intense ways on two occasions; both revolving around health care. The reason I had to borrow tons of money for a surgery was the small bookstore I worked at wouldn't get any new insurance to cover their employees when their old company went belly up, and I was left without coverage, but earning too much to qualify for Medicare. It didn't seem to faze them in the slightest. I don't think my story is all that atypical.

I don't know AK Press's particulars, but I do sympathize with the yearning to want to earn one's living through what one loves. Alice Koller, years ago wrote “The Stations of Solitude,” in many ways is a flawed book (it wanders and lacks focus at times). But she has a great chapter on work which, in my opinion, redeems the book. She distinguished between work and job, a job being what you do in order to pay bills, buy groceries, etc. Work is what you do because it gives your life meaning (it used to be referred to as a “calling”). Koller noted that there are a few people for whom work and job have merged, and that this is a great gift in life. But for a huge majority of people, work and job are distinct and the juggling of the demands of the two is a major source of psychic tension for people. The thing is that

most jobs are so demanding that there is little time left for work; one has to be almost ruthless to carve out work time and then that brings in a whole other set of difficulties as you will be perceived as anti-social. It is very difficult to find a solution to this and groups like AK Press are attempting, I think, to bring about the merger that Koller refers to.

But there are other modes of transmitting knowledge, though they are difficult to recognize. Take a mundane example, like bonsai. The knowledge of how to do bonsai is passed on between those who are interested; hardly anyone actually makes a career out of it; people do it because they find it satisfying. Similarly, I think it would be possible to pass on anarchist knowledge and even anarchist books, in such a manner.

JF

No Way Out But Thoreau

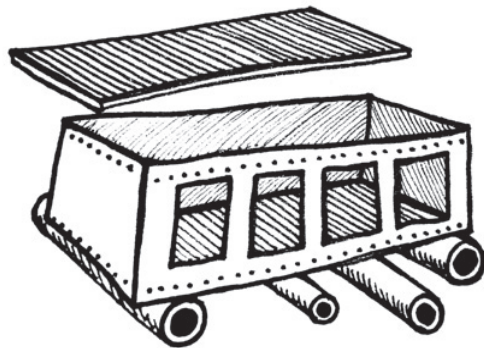
“There are...general theoretical reasons for not voting—it grants legitimacy to the system; it can be taken to imply consent; it pretends to be an exercise in freedom, when in fact it isn't; it can't have a real impact on the fundamental problems.” (p. 38)

Popular government uses universal suffrage as a means of countering revolution. In addition, the Thoreauvian anarchist notion of civil disobedience is an integral part of popular government.

A member of the electorate partakes regardless of whether he votes, for not voting is a form of civil disobedience, and such disobedience helps check society against totalitarianism, democratization, over-politicization—what Thomas Hobbes called a war of all against all, that only a tyrant would be able to quell.

Government by the people (electorate), for the people (civil service), and in representation of the people (elected representatives) serves, or at least should, the interest of the common good vice the “poor”, as democracy does.

Anarchists should, therefore, understand that, as long as they remain citizens, they do contribute and thus grant 'legitimacy to the system'. Whether they vote or not should be dependent on how they perceive society: Has it become more surveillanced? More democratic, i.e. does it cater to those who whine the most? If so, then don't vote, and encourage others, perhaps patriots that desire to serve the common good, not to as well.



Statistically, without any encouragement, more people are choosing not to vote. The popular will, which is considered by democrats-who are usually the first to consider creating laws forcing people to vote-to be inherently good, is apparently discerning a shift towards totalitarianism; perhaps proving that the popular will is both inherently good, and accurate. This, I believe, since it has already begun, is something anarchists should exploit, ultimately pitting the Thoreauvian populus against the demos, thus appealing to American philosophy and traditional sensibilities over alien ideologies and obscurantism.

"For his elevation of the individual reason against reasons of state and of the individual conscience against national loyalties, Thoreau ranks among the true anarchists." - George Woodcock, *The Anarchist Reader* (1980)

A system of government that integrates the elevation of individual reason and conscience against the state and national loyalties, the very essence of Thoreau's disobedience, as the US and Canadian models of government do, cannot be all that bad.

Bryan
www.thoreausociety.org

More Dead Soldiers on TV, Please

When I visited Moscow, I was quite shocked to learn that there is more freedom on their news stations than in America. As I watched the War in Iraq on Moscow television, I actually saw the carnage that was actually taking place. American soldiers being shot and killed live on TV. When I taught the Soviet Threat with OPFOR (Opposing Forces) in the Army during the early 80s, I told the elite troops that the Russian government suppresses the news from their people. It looks like we are the actual culprits

in suppressing news from our own people. If people saw the real news in Iraq, they would want the war to end immediately.

PDR
Elk Grove, Ca

Bob on Treachery, Corruption, & Penis Envy

Fellow Egophiles,

Following up, hopefully for the last time, on Ward Churchill – sorry, because of a last-minute, incompletely executed revision, I twice expressed my opinion that he is a longtime agent provocateur. I'd belatedly discovered that I'd said so once before, in these pages, and got away with it then. I offer reasons in "Up Sand Creek Without a Paddle" (available from me as a Word document and also by Googling online).

My prediction that Churchill would take a buyout so far is unfulfilled – his lawyer mentioned \$10,000,000 as a talking point, which is a high price to pay off an academic fraud. Churchill is suing, alleging retaliation for his 9/11 remarks. I am willing to consider that Churchill was fired

for the wrong reason, but he was also hired for the wrong reason. Kneejerk leftists (including – as always! Noam Chomsky) – also, regrettably, *Green Anarchy* – have not even bothered to review the overwhelming evidence of plagiarism, falsification and related academic malpractice, which is apparent in all of Churchill's sub-academic writing, not just the few examples his university minutely documented. I've documented as many more. Anybody can do it.

Churchill will lose his lawsuit because, if the University of Colorado has a good reason to fire him (it does), it is irrelevant whether the real motivation was retaliatory. I will go out on a limb again and predict pre-trial dismissal.

I regret that there was not space for me to address, in addition to Wolfi's falsifications regarding Bacon, Bruno and the history of science, the substance of his misunderstanding or misrepresentation of science itself. I wish someone more qualified would do that sometime. Wolfi's fear of abstraction as a threat to particularity (lest his own fragile ego be subsumed) is misplaced, it is only the verbal acting-out of psychological inadequacy. According to Clifford Geertz – an interpretivist and leading critic of objectivist scientism – "Theory grows out of particular circumstances and, however abstract, is validated by its power to order them in their full particularity, not by stripping that particularity away." To "order" facts is not to order them around, it is more like entering into a relationship with them. Wolfi objectifies and generalizes as recklessly as anybody, but his abstractions and generalities are powerless, impotent, neither ordering nor disordering anything. This is just penis envy dressed up in fancy talk.

I refer the readers to www.communalism.net, the Bookchinist website, for an article by Janet Biehl, "Bookchin Breaks with Anarchism," which shows very well how tenuous was Murray Bookchin's affirmation of anarchism even when he boasted of being its all-time greatest thinker. Biehl now admits that Bookchin "privately rejected anarchism as such

[sic: "as such" is a Bookchin tic] in 1995, around the time he wrote 'Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism.'" The great one did not publicly announce his apostasy until 1999, or publish it until 2002.

Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism is therefore – not only not anarchist, as was easily shown at the time by AJODA reviewers Jason McQuinn and Laure Akai, and by me in *Anarchy after Leftism* – it was anti-anarchist sabotage and treachery. SALA was published by AK Press. Either he got AK Press (= Ramsay "Citizen" Kanaan) to publish it under false pretenses, or – Citizen Kanaan published it because it was anti-anarchist.

Now many readers will be inclined to agree that the AK Press version of anarchism is impoverished, retarded and retrograde, and find it easy enough to attribute its publication of SALA to the naivete and stupidity which are obvious in its editorial decisions. If it were just that, the last thing AK Press would want is for Biehl's expose to get around, right? Ha! AK Press is reprinting Biehl's article in *Anarchism for the 21st Century*, ed. Larry Gambone and Pat Murtagh – forthcoming from AK Press! AK has already reprinted Bookchin's 2002 essay denouncing anarchism in a collection published this year.

AK Press has by these publishing decisions clearly the crossed the line between being a really lousy anarchist publisher to being – can anybody suggest a rival? – the foremost anti-anarchist publisher in the English-speaking world. AK's only possible goal is the destruction of any autonomous anarchist movement or tendency, with the fragments to be swept away or swept into innocuous state leftism. Is the state possibly behind this? Not necessarily. However, it is illegal for foreign anarchists even to enter the United States for any purpose (32 Stat. 1213, 1214 [1903]), much less do business here, so it is mysterious how Kanaan can be operating here. How did he get a pass?

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V is for Vandalism

To me, there is nothing more aggravating than a stupid person. It is my hope that the average person would, at least mostly, agree with that statement. So when I see someone drive by in a "Hemi" powered or "Supercharged" vehicle during our current Climate Crisis, it really makes my blood boil. I can't help but feel like I should end their selfishly destructive life. I'm sure there are a few of you tree huggers out there who feel the same way. Needless to say, a harmless way of channeling this anger has become a bit of a necessity for people like us. Jeff Foxworthy suggests that all stupid people should have to wear a sign... I think he's on to something, maybe even right. And so, my freedom fighting friends and I—with the vision of a better future in mind—have decided to launch the 'Stupid People Are Needlessly Killing Mother Earth' campaign, or 'SPANK ME' for short. We will be branding petrol stations, McDonald's restaurants, Wal-Mart department stores, car dealerships and, of course, gas guzzling vehicles through the use of signs, markers and paint. Together, and perhaps with the help of you; "SPANK ME, I'm Stupid!" will be seen on the properties of ignorant people everywhere. Whether you feel like taking part in mild property damage or not, you must do something about Global Warming. For the sake of our children, for our children's children, and for us. Working together, we can take hold of this problem, and solve the crisis.

Sincerely, V

Additional notes for Anarchy Journal, Echo Weekly and the Rhetorical Revolution:

The following should be obvious to most, but sometimes it's best to say something anyway. An anarchist activist myself, I have seen how narrow minded people can be, especially fellow anarchists (or at least 'wish-they-were' fellow anarchists). So I would like to make sure that everyone understands that without a planet—politics, or lack

of, can not exist. Having said that, without political change or abandonment, it is unlikely that global warming can be solved. I think the only thing more important than global warming, in our current world, is the media crisis. The no longer existing free press needs to be revived. If it is not, there is a very small chance people will take global warming (or any other major issue) seriously enough to fix it in time. So I suggest that everyone who reads this, anarchist, tree-hugger, neither or both, should start being as active as possible towards this media problem as well as global warming. But please remember, there is a difference between activists, and extremists. The question of ignorance as innocence is a question to be dealt with once our planet and press is back to the way it should be. That is, back in the hands of the responsibly free.

For those of you, who don't know of these issues I speak of, please research it a bit. If you're really lazy, you can watch the following documentaries to be the basic just of it: "An Inconvenient Truth" and "Orwell Rolls in His Grave" Again, very sincerely, V

Apathy in the UK

Editors,

Apathy in the UK, the most recent tour of The Sex Pistols has angered me greatly. A bunch of middle-aged guys are, once again, cashing in on fame and the 30th anniversary of the release of "Anarchy in the UK". Are these guys just hoping for one more crack at fame, clamouring for a new audience and increased sales?

Reunions of bands are the musical equivalent of a post script, an additional thought. Let's face it when bands reunite it's a trip down Amnesia Lane, a desperate stab at nostalgia and no one is ever interested in the new material; they just want to be reminded of a time in the past when they were different people. Why aim this at the Pistols? Why not?

What angers me most is the

flippant use of 'anarchy'; ranging from a transient term, a fashion statement to the more worrying equation with 'terrorist'. But then that is the umbrella for anything that is not immediately understood. Anarchy has lost its role in the latest tour, I just wish it hadn't. It seems that the collective for these anarchists = concert audience.

The Sex Pistols inspired so many bands, The Buzzcocks, Nirvana, Oasis, The Fall, The Clash, to name a few, and social movements, punk and a greater awareness of Nihilism, but are now arguably a parody of their former selves. 'Anarchy in the UK' was to coin one of their own phrases, 'bollocks'; a slight unsettling of the powers that be but no real anarchy. But the Sex Pistols were never anarchists they just used the term to generate attention, like naughty children; I wonder if, as adults, they should know better.

Johnny Rotten, aka John Lydon, the property tycoon stands in a fantastic position to decry the invasion of privacy in the UK—Britain is the most watched country in the world (more CCTV coverage than anywhere else with your image appearing at least 100 times a day). That is something to scream about but I just wonder if it falls to t-shirts sales, perhaps even designed by the doyenne of English fashion, Vivienne Westwood, to make a more obvious statement. Orwell's frightening prediction so clearly correct, yet what is being done about it?

The recent indirect reference to The Sex Pistols by David Cameron (Conservative Party Leader), using "Anarchy in the UK" as a way of describing the UK's disillusioned youth would perhaps be better as "Apathy in the UK". The younger generation seems incapable of generating the passion to change their situation and are unaware that they hold the potential to do so. So many of these fine young people could be anarchists

but have no idea for what it stands. Ripped t-shirts and hoodies do not an anarchist make.

I am so angry but what am I going to do about it? Wait until the children are in bed and in true fashion, write an angry letter and assuage my conscience by believing I did something and join the passive anarchists.

Rhian



Life & Times of species being

AJODA,

Thanks to Australopithecus etc. for the stimulating and very generous review of my book *species being and other stories* (more an engagement than a review). I won't respond too much to the issues that he raises, which I think are mostly fair dinkum, but as the last issue of AJODA concerned the nature of capital accumulation within anarchist practice, and that this tendency to accumulate is defined in the book as the defining practice of all human organisations, then it seems reasonable to talk about how to get organized enough to produce a book that is reviewed in AJODA. Obviously, a book costs money to produce and it makes money when it is sold. The money raised to produce it forms the capital belonging to the producers and the money gained through sales (should) flow back to the producers as a return on the investment (in Marx's terms this is the basic cycle

C-M-C or M-C-M depending how generous you want to be about the use-values generated in relation to the commodity aspect). I have no insight into, or experience of, the second aspect of the cycle of my book's production (i.e. the sales) but I am sure it has often been quite tedious and hard work (and this not included in the cost). However, I will give a little background to how



the book became possible, as well as how the initial capital investment helped define the activity of production and the relations between those involved (I hope all this illuminates somewhat the theoretical discussions of AJODA 64). Firstly, I didn't write a book, I think that would have defeated me straight off – the book is only a collection of bits and pieces added together. I do writing every day as some people do yoga or drink themselves to death, it's a sort of system, and I found after a two year period that I had accumulated a book-load of the stuff which had previously been 'published' on my livejournal or on Anti-politics.com. As I thought about the volume of what I'd written I thought I discerned some patterns between the various pieces and so the idea of collecting them together in a book format first occurred. There are obvious advantages to the book form, for example its permanence in comparison with the perpetual forgetting that is induced by reading off the internet. However, as with *Nih-Com* it was my intention to self-publish the book and distribute it directly (and freely as a gift of myself) to those who I thought might be interested (basically those who already had some idea about what I am about). This changed later for two reasons, the first being that I simply could not get a publisher interested. First, I tried Meta-

mute's POD scheme, simply because I thought they were vaguely right-on and therefore would be more sympathetic or whatever. I don't know what happened to them but the trail went cold quickly. Then I tried a couple of local printers, in both cases, the initial enthusiasm on their part (I was waving a wad of upfront cash under their noses) paled, and the two week pe-

riod they promised to get back to me within then had another two weeks added, then another and then they lost the disk etc. etc. The other reason I went

with Ardent Press is that I mentioned my tale of woe to those involved and they said they wanted to publish a book and we tentatively put two and two together. As I had the money anyway it seemed a good idea to both publish the book and aid in the formation of a new radical publisher... it was a quick simple impulse to hand the money over (which otherwise would have been simply expended) and hope that any revenue generated would be invested in new and other books, of which I think there are now so few what with writers mediating their ideas through academic theses and/or bleeding their thoughts slowly into the abyss of the internet. I greatly appreciated the help with layout which progressed my text from the original ultra-rudimentary style I had adopted and also the editing which I had given no thought to. However, for both sides perhaps, we did not give any thought to the act of making publicly available that which was essentially a private piece of work. I am sure you have also encountered the difference that exists between the style you adopt within a defined sphere in which you are comfortable and the more guarded/cautious style that is adopted when intended for an unknown audience. The first style is characterised by assertion and associative leaps, whilst the other must make references and proceed block by block. Of course,

some of these issues were addressed in the production process. For example the name of the book was changed, originally I was going to call it 'markings' and then I changed that to 'scratchings' referring to the meaninglessness of communications in which (what I now know is called) the basic expected redundancy in the receiver position is absent and results in the message 'falling on deaf ears'. However, it remains a fact that the texts in the book were written on a personal scale and this causes me a certain level of embarrassment, even shame, because Ardent Press have to try and sell it. Perhaps I am capable of writing a more commodity orientated book that would communicate better, fill in the gaps, and in the end find a bigger market; perhaps I am capable of that form of communication but then again perhaps I'm not. Therefore, as I move on to discuss the issues of content you have raised, I would suggest that it may be important to consider the vulnerabilities of the book partially as a result of a conflict between the public and private styles of communication which I have set out. Now, to your comments on the essay earthen cup which you spend most time on: I am quite proud of this essay which I wrote after reading a fair number of anthropologist writings from the 1930's, particularly pieces written by those non-cp communist intellectuals associated (some tangentially) with La Collège de Sociologie in Paris such as Bataille, Callois, Leiris, Benjamin and so on. The idea of a surrealist-oriented anthropology greatly appealed to me, defined, as it was, by investigations into a 'sacred' that is located in those irrational behaviours nurtured by capitalist social institutions which are ostensibly dominated by fordist rationalisation. I wanted to set out not just the characteristics of an elective community or brotherhood but also to describe how these characteristics are always and already present in every human organisation. I wanted to show how these irrational factors which play such a large role in organising are nonetheless largely invisibly to the organisation's membership who, by and large, fo-

cus their attention on the most manifest aspect of their structure. The term earthen cup suggested itself because of the film *Sans Soleil*, the leftist filmmaker Chris Marker's study of the sacred aspects of modern Japan. Earthen cup is listed in the film's narration amongst other objects as 'things that give a clean feeling', the list first appears in the wonderful book *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon* – the writing contained in this book was also directed to a minute audience, and it is this sense of vulnerable scale that is perhaps what makes it so compelling. A good example of an initially non-commodity form of writing. This, along with the insights gained from the economic/geophysical pressures in exacerbating religious feeling as explored in the film *The Wicker Man* formed the intellectual context for my account. On another level entirely, I wanted to explore the dynamics of anarchist and other pro-revolutionary groups, what is going on in the structuring of relations other than the stated aims and functions? What is there going on other than politics? How is it, for example that, a mere disagreement about politics allows for the exchange between seeming comrades of insults and fragmentations? What gives someone the right to attack me because I minutely diverge from their truth and yet they would never dream of attacking, for example, passengers on the bus that they are travelling on but who share no common interest with them at all. This intimate cleaving – splitting and converging – appears to me to have an extremely irrational basis. I have designated the process by which experiences and objects are accumulated in the name of an elective identity earthen cup because that appealed to me – you are free to analyse this further and come up with a more appropriate, less concrete term. Two things are for sure, the first is that after more than ten years of more or less full-on trolling and counter-trolling, flame warring, staw-manning and ad hominem on the internet, we can no longer assume that our organisations, our relations, our user-personnae, even ourselves, are fully under our control, or subject to

letters

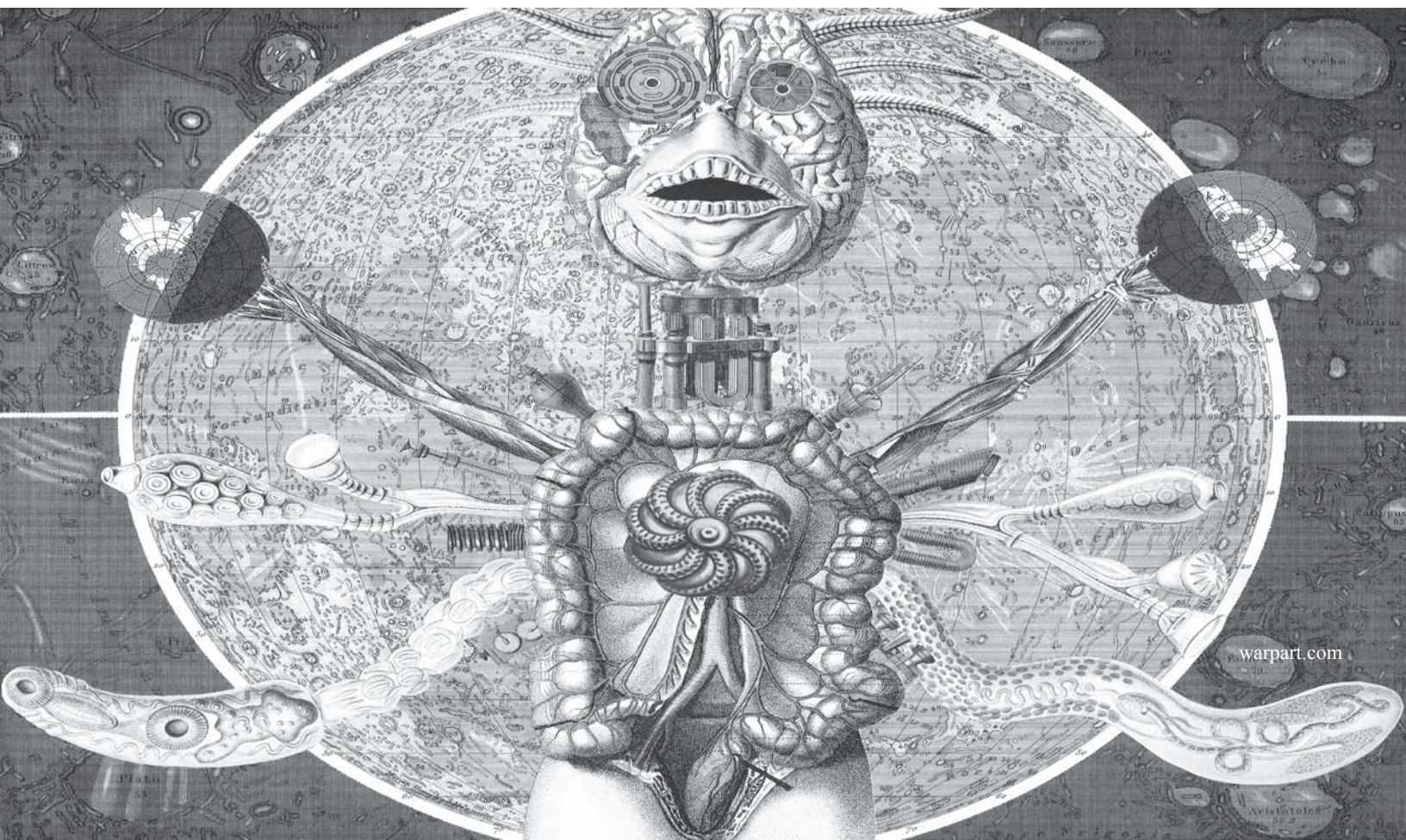
our rationality. The other thing that earthen cup sets out as a general law is that we are all of us bound by the process of accumulation, e.g. the published book *species being* is an object that participates in the accumulations of certain discussions and also helps define the accumulations of a writer-publisher-sales unit (how we deal with that is a matter raised in AJODA 64 and hopefully will continue to exist as an issue at the forefront of our activities). Briefly, on to other matters you raised. You talk about religious type language. Yes, I wanted to explore mythic themes in a mythic form, this was a deliberate decision. I fully accept Camatte's argument that we must connect with those strains of thought condemned as 'mystical' or religious in order to learn what it was that they contributed to our collective life and what it is that they left out and which must be addressed. I wanted to see what I might include in my descriptions that would otherwise be left out. I thought I could achieve this by writing outside of political conventions. Without actually relinquishing or compromising any of my critique of spiritual-

ity or the materialist /mechanistic ground of my ideas, I set myself the task of making contact with a conception of revolution that touched on 'being' rather than political issues. Tom Ze says of his experience of Tropicalia, 'There are those on the left and those on the right and then there are those who may be innocently touched by aesthetics, experiment and innovation.' Like Ze, I hoped to contact another set of people, perhaps those who are interested in 'spirituality' rather than in politics. I set out to write about where my interests lay, and by and large these interests have been directed outside the conventions and typical discussions of our milieu. In the introduction I talk about an 'anarchist book of the dead' by this I mean a text that can aid in the process of passing from one state of consciousness to another. I wanted to show that it is not necessary when one encounters the limits of anarchist politics to respond by becoming consumed with frustration and exhaustion, and then go on to give up and 'grow up' as so many of us tend to do. It is well established in our given trajectory that most of us try hard for

a few years to change the world, then we encounter a moment of contemplation and we find the world unchanged, then we move on. I want to insist that it is possible to retain ideas of change even as we mature and that these ideas may inform the life of anyone, not just the young angry and disaffected. Two last points, I did not address the French Revolution because I am an amateur nonacademic writer who was not attempting a complete survey of early modern revolutionary attitudes. I am interested in the English Revolution because it is both immediately 'all around me' and also incredibly distant and alien. I was not talking about Kronstadt so much as the discussions of Kronstadt and then only because I was engaging in an ever-vigilant argument against the return to Lenin in its various forms. As Monsieur Dupont we consistently refuted the claims and assumptions of what we described as the 'leaderless Leninism' that is found in many anarchist groups. As an example of the ongoing nature of the problem, the return to Lenin has currently been proposed by the academic Zizek as well as the Swed-

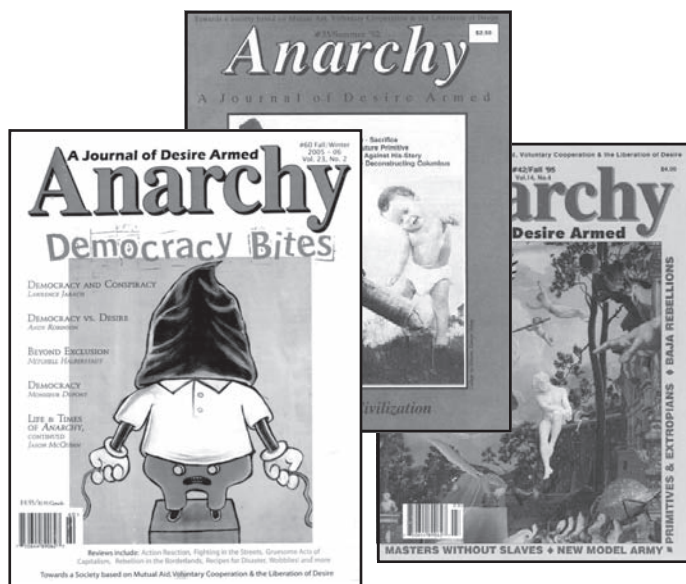
ish communist group riffraff who propose a 'leaderless Bolshevism', and this to name just two of a whole market of people who have the name of that fetish always about to form on their lips. The discussion is constant and has been for decades and no doubt will go on for as long as there are alienated pro-rev groups with nothing better to do. My framing of the argument used a well-known English nursery rhyme concerning kittens and mittens – I suppose I intended to raise a question about the use of the rewards of belonging if one utters the 'correct lines' and how difficult it is to pick a way through and memorise all of the arguments belonging to the correct line. It often used to strike me as extraordinary that monks of the various religious traditions could memorise long theological tracts but those tracts defined their lives, and so it is with these old arguments about even older events for us; after half a lifetime's apprenticeship we find that we have become those discussions we used to think of as mere means to an end.

FD



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